

ACE

■ ST ■ AMIGA ■ C64 ■
CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

THE ULTIMATE GAMES MAGAZINE

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

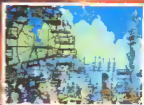
1991
New Year
Holiday Special



EXCLUSIVE

GO TO HELL!

Incredible 16bit/CD visit to Hades



GO TO MARS!

...with Origin's latest masterpiece

GO TO THE ZOO

...and puzzle over RGB

GO BACK IN TIME!

With our list of ACE classics

Corks!

Where's your FREE and EXCLUSIVE guide to Advanced Cartridge Entertainment? Ask the chap behind the counter.



PLUS!

Over 30 pages of New-Year bargains in the Picks



GO TO THE BARBERS!

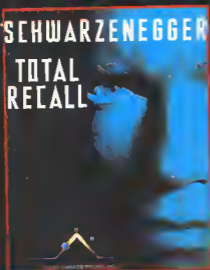
Jaron 'Virtual Reality' Lanier interviewed

PLUS Epic, Ocean's Wing Commander: rival;
ECO Phantoms; Toyota Celica; Battle Command...



DOWN

SCHWARZENEGGER TOTAL RECALL



As Doug Quaid you have been haunted by recurring dreams of another life on Mars. You are drawn to Rekall Incorporated, a unique travel service specializing in implanting fantasies into the minds of those who desire to turn their dreams into reality.

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MORE THAN A GAME - ROBOCOP 2 IS THE PRIME DIRECTIVE.



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It's not all bad, you've got a chooper to back you up, a mega shiny blast machine, some heavy metal hardware and some pretty neat movies. And what about the King pin did I say he was Mr. Big? No he's

MR BIG!

Available on...
*Available on...
 Available on...*

"Gosh! What a CLEVER little gnomesy-womesy you are! Goo-goo diddums, little poppet! And watch out for those nasty trollis-wollisies!"

King Richard II of Cheshyre, King Quest II, by Roberta Williams. In two pages. Most of this issue's. Continued on page 26.



British military personnel have been trained in Marsland simulations for possible combat encounters. Help. See page 26.



After Marsland, it's wargames for the boys thanks to Battle Command from Ocean. How have the Marslander devils done? Find out on page 61.



Units Buddy & Fun House - In the Future of Interactive Fiction? See page 36.

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Gremlin's *Little Devil* won't be...
But of course, ACE has the...

THE GREATEST!

Over the years, ACE has given you the definitive ratings and reviews of over 1,000 pieces of software. And we've spent literally months compiling and collating such and every game to produce the grandest (although not serious) list: *The Greatest 100 Games Since 1980*.

We've broken down *The Greatest 100* into easy-to-use categories. Now you can tell at a glance which is the best shoot-'em-up, the best fighting game, the best adventure and so on. We don't expect that you'll agree with everything we say, but we think you'll agree with most. If you've just bought yourself a new machine or have exhausted the current supply of games, this guide is for you.

This month we have the first part, set for conclusion next time, along with some handy tips as to how you can actually obtain some of those forgotten masterpieces. First step, however, is page 53.



Little Devil is a fantastic, yet serious game. It's the best... Lord... has ever given you... See page 72.



The Five Icons: Digital Image Design, headed up by Martin Kinnear, unveil their latest project to P.A. Bytes. Read super-sensational Kinnear's amazing chat logs to all programmers: "Beat my routine and who's best!"

NEW ERA ACE gets a new editor next month as Jim Douglas takes over the reins from Steva Cooke and Britain's top entertainment technology magazine strides into the '90s. Steva's been with the magazine (with one short break) ever since it started and is now leaving to pursue new areas of advanced computer entertainment. Rest assured that he'll still be contributing to the magazine on a regular basis. To celebrate his departure, we've reviewed all those games which should have been finished in time for the Christmas issue, including *Robocop 2*, *Chase HQ 2* and *Line of Fire*. Plus an exclusive look at Gremlin's stunning CD game; Ocean's answer to *Wing Commander*, *EPIC*; state-of-the-art Marconi sims; a painstakingly crafted Guide to the Greatest Games ever, and a horrible story on how you can actually eat Tetris...

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KISSING THE PINK

-89-
A quick glance at our Press will solve all your new-machine queries and needs. And it's packed with bargains too!

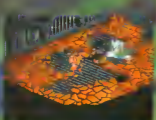
King's Quest II 256 colours, 5.7 megabytes, and a Super Nintendo schematic. Pages to page 58.

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Oh. And that's what you reckon is it? And, Heaven help us, we *printed* it...
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Machine specific columns, buyers guides, juicy mail-order ads, adventure tips... and more



COVER STORY

ACE. In its ever-expanding quest for stories from around the world visits sunny Sheffield to report on *King's Quest V*. In Graphix CD Amiga game which boasts some of the hottest graphics we've seen. Ex-Sull van Bluth programmers have already put in a year's work on the project and there's a further nine months to go. The game chronicles the Devil's passage through the flaming corridors of Hades with enormous hand-drawn mountains and beautiful scenery. Turn to page 2 for the full story.



FEBRUARY 1991

WHY BUY A COMPUTER GAME WHEN YOU CAN HAVE YOUR OWN ARCADE?



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NEWS

Your first Sony

Sony, the leading Japanese electronics company, has produced a new series of great gadgets for preteen kids.

Following the £50 price mark of the 1-year-old handheld console in £129.99, Atari has announced a string of new software titles due to be launched over the coming months, including *ZOO*, *Gold Mines*, *Packard Wings*, *Genies*, *S.F.U.V.*, *Kurios*, *Cyberball*, and *PV Fighter*. Atari hopes to have at least 100,000 1-year owners in Britain before the start of spring.

My First Sony creative products are split into three fun-filled gizmo's. The graphic computer costs 25000 yen (around £100) and plugs into a normal television set. Children can draw any kind of picture by simply pressing the appropriate shape and colour keys and manipulate these on-screen images using the built-in joystick. This device can be thought of as the electronic equivalent of a children's painting book.

The other two Sony gadgets are sound machines for making special sound effects (£40) and electronically changing a child's voice (£20).

There's no reason why these My First Sony products couldn't be distributed outside Japan (with some minor modifications needed to be made to the computer). They may be on show during the British Toy Fair later this month at London's Earls Court.



Who says you have to be a kid to have fun with these electronic gadgets?

Carrier Airwing

Birmingham-based US Gold is set to commence work converting Capcom's latest cut-up onto home computer format. Carrier Airwing, another game in the UN Squadron style of scrolling shoot-'em-ups, is currently proving popular in arcade halls across the country.

In the game you have to battle through 10 'death-defying' missions to destroy the ultimate weapon. Along the way you attack the enemy's arsenal and a giant fort, and fly a diagonal ascent from low altitude close to a highway and then vertically descent into a valley.

Carrier Airwing also incorporates breathtaking air-to-air combat over cities, valleys, deserts and ocean. Fortunately, you have the choice of flying three fighters.

Rick Ford from New York City flies the F-14 Tom Cat. Ford was placed first in his class of the Navy's Top Gun fighter combat school and is unmatched in air-to-air combat. The FA-18A Hornet is flown by Louisiana-born James Roy, a member of the U.S. Navy Blue Angels' acrobatics team. Roy's adroit handling of his plane gives him an advantage against both air and ground foes. Finally, Mark Olson takes to the skies in a A-6E Intruder. A former U.S. Navy squad leader, Olson is known for being able to drop a bomb anywhere under any conditions.

Carrier Airwing should be available on a macro near you before the end of '91. US Gold has yet to decide on the best people to convert the game.

It's a cracker

Saferno from Illinois in America has introduced a new snack cracker based around the Soviet Union's popular puzzle game. Could this be the natural food for a perfect Tetris hi-score?

Tetris Crackers, a light battery bite-size snack, come in five Tetris puzzle shapes. These new snacks contain no artificial flavours, no preservatives and are low in saturated fats.

Saferno also sells Super Mario Bros. 3 chocolate cookies inspired by the cult Nintendo arcade platform game.

Japanese taking over the leisure biz

Go-Video in Arizona, USA has filed a federal anti-trust lawsuit seeking to block the recent merger between the American entertainment company, MCA, and the giant Japanese electronics firm, Matsushita. MCA is not named in the action.

MCA has interests in Universal Studios and Yosemite National Park in California, and Matsushita's brand-names read like a who's who in consumer electronics with companies like Panasonic, JVC and Technics on its extensive list.

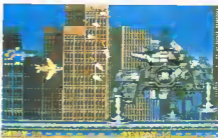
Last year, Sony merged with CBS Records and has now renamed the New York-based company to Sony Music Corporation. Sony already owns Columbia Pictures.

These Japanese takeover bids may not be good news for American business-people but they could pave the way for an exciting new range of audio-visual electro-entertainment decks like CD-I and revolutionary portable video and musical playback devices. For Japanese companies like Sony and Matsushita now own the hardware and software of the world's major movie and music biz. Only Walt Disney is left in American hands... are there any Tokyo Takers? We wait for the Osaka fax with bated breath!

Smashed and Grabbed

Williams' Smash TV, where contestants mercilessly kill each other to the applause of a bloodthirsty audience, was voted the most innovative videogame of the recent AMGA coin-op convention in New Orleans.

Ocean has grabbed the computer rights with Probe (Golden Axe) handling the conversions due in September.



Intrepid alert - should that be a Star Cat has now been!

Fighting the boss at the end of stage 2.



With a million copies of *Mighty Bomber Jack* on the Nintendo Entertainment System have already been sold.

Would you rather Jack?

Atari's *Contra* has developed a large-screen interactive golf simulator for punters who wish to practice their putts and swings in comfort. The simulator is based around a laserdisc system giving it the flexibility of a more new golf course very quickly and relatively cheaply.

Elite is set to release a follow-up to *Bomber Jack*, its highly successful co-operation of Tecmo's platform arcade game. The appropriately titled *Mighty Bomber Jack* has 17 levels with some 250 screens of action.

"Our first *Bomber Jack* title, released way back in 1986, and our sequel *Bomber Jack II* in 1987, were both attributed with the number one Gallup chart position for several weeks and with the release of *Mighty Bomber Jack* we are confident that we can make this a hot ticket for Tecmo and us," says a confident *Elite*.

So it's over to Amiga, ST, PC and C64 gameplayers to prove *Elite* right (or wrong) when *Mighty Bomber Jack* is released later this month.

Laserdisc Games are Back

In a surprising move, the American Laser Company has released a new laserdisc arcade game called *Mad Dog McCree*.

Laserdisc technology dates back to the late '70's when Pioneer in the States produced the first optical video disc system for the consumer. Other companies soon followed with their own systems - like Philips' LaserVision - and digital video was born.

The first generation of laserdisc video games, such as Don Smith's *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*, were released in the early eighties. Unfortunately, though they were initially very popular their primitive technology made them very unreliable and they quickly faded from the coin-op scene. The American Laser Company hopes it can overcome these reliability problems by employing state-of-the-art technology in its new laserdisc game.

Mad Dog McCree is a Western adventure featuring shoot-outs at the cowboy corral, saloon bar and Sheriff's office. You play the latest gunslinger in town. For the best effects, *Mad Dog McCree* can be played on a massive 70" monitor.

Atari Games - producer of *Paperboy*, *Hard Drivin'* and *S.T.U.N. Runner* - has signed up the European rights to the *Mad Dog McCree* coin-op. No company has claimed the home computer or console conversion deals yet.



Could *Retaliator* be the fastest ever flight sim played on the PC?

Retaliator lands on PC

The award-winning flight-sim from Digital Image Design and Ocean is due to be launched on the PC before the spring, and make no mistake this baby is fast and better too!

"We've got a 20MHz 386PC and it's running of 30 40 frames a second," offers Martin Kenwright of Digital Image Design. "The slowest it'll go down to is 10 frames that's when you're flying over a complex city with over half a dozen fighters chasing after you." Amazingly, F-29 *Retaliator* runs at the same speed on a standard Amstrad PC as it does on the Amiga.

Digital Image Design has a rather unorthodox problem with the PC version - it's moving too fast and they've got to slow it down "It really does fly," laughs Kenwright.

PC gamesters will also get more for their hard earned cash in this version of acknowledged flight simulation than other gameplayers have, as the world's have been filled in from their Amiga and ST cousins. "We've created a nicer environment with more rivers, trees etc," explains Kenwright. The PC version of F-29 *Retaliator* has been programmed by Jason Brooke, who previously worked with macro musician, Dave Whittaker "It's his first major project and he's handled it really well."

You'll be able to link up two PCs together and play head-to-head *Retaliator* with a friend - or the boss! "Comm's" is the big one," believes Kenwright, "It's the first ever time a frame compensated com-link has been implemented." Basically, this allows fair play between gamesters with different classes of PC. People with 8MHz machines won't be blown out of the sky by 386 turbo-nutters - unless the 386 owner is a better pilot! "This has been a nightmare to code, but it's wicked. Two machines on a cable is absolutely fabulous."

Digital Image Design is promising a bug-free game this time. "It's the best *Retaliator* of them all. Everything has been enhanced - from radars to weapon systems," says Kenwright. You'll be able to find out for yourself when F-29 *Retaliator* is ready for release in the spring.



TOP DANCE TRACKS

1. ALL TOGETHER NOW - THE FARM
2. ANNY AMO
3. HAPPY MONDAYS
4. ECOLOGIST - THE SCIENTIST

Apparently, criminals

are using strange mice to steal computer and computer files. These *Anti-Mice* mice pair this strange rich liquid over display mode to short-circuit the mouse's electronic security systems. Beware of anyone offering you a cheap *Anti-Mouse* with mice for balance in your local pet!



Imageworks describes its Predator 2 computer game as an "aching 3D sideways scrolling shoot 'em up that replicates all the action and terror of what is certain to be a box office smash."

Predator is meaner than ever

It sets the heat of your body. It smells the heat of your feet. It hunts for sport. It kills for pleasure. It's the Predator.

The fearsome Predator alien is back in an exciting sci-fi thriller film from 20th Century Fox with Imageworks providing a game across all major micro formats.

Following on from its blockbuster predecessor starring European muscle-man Arnold Schwarzenegger, the movie is set about five years from now in Los Angeles. Mike Harrigan, a tough LA cop played by Danny Glover (Mel Gibson's partner in the Lethal Weapon movies), is investigating a series of mysterious murders while on intense street-war rages between Jamaican and Colombian drug barons.

In the Imageworks title, you play Harrigan in an Operation Wolf style pop-up and shoot-it game. You have the choice of four weapons, such as a pump-action shotgun or grenade-launcher, with the full-back of a Magnum pistol. This four level shoot-'em-up is based around scenes in the movie such as a subway massacre and the violent confrontation between Harrigan and the Predator in a downtown slough tenhouse.

"Predator 2 is packed with fast and furious action and the most stunning FX ever seen on the big screen, we are determined to capture the action and excitement of this sure fire film hit," says Imageworks. The game and movie are due in April. The game will be available on the Amiga, Spectrum, PC, C64, ST and CPC.

Wuboli based Arc Developments (Forgotten Worlds) is coding the game and Stephen Hopkins (Nightmare on Elm Street 5) is directing the motion picture.

The original Predator film was turned into a game by Activision and System Three back in '87. Fans of the Predator or Alien comic's should be pleased to hear Activision is turning this successful series into a Nintendo video game. There are also rumours of a Predator vs Aliens movie.

ACE in Japan

- More frustrated queues of gamers have appeared outside Japanese stores since the recent launch of Nintendo's Super Famicom console. Orders for this much sought-after 16-bit machine have exceeded two million units. Regrettably, it seems Nintendo can only produce 300,000 units per month until March. The Super Famicom is scheduled for an American launch at the beginning of September, the British release should come soon after that.

- There is only one bomb left. It will explode at 7 o'clock tonight. Do not touch it! I will repeat your orders: "Captures the Russian Fog. This is the only way to avoid being sunk. This order is final". So begins Nostalgia, the new 'intelligence

action game' from Tokaru in Japan. The game is set in 1907 aboard a passenger steam-ship crossing the North Atlantic. Nostalgia is filled with intrigue and puzzles to solve. Available for the X68000, it costs 11,800 yen (around £47) and comes complete with a scene-setting audio CD. Who knows the secret of the pink rose?

- Populous fans in Japan can now buy a compact disc filled with the music and sound effects from the game. Unfortunately, Bulfrog the creators of Populous and Powermonger will not see a penny in royalties because of unfair copyright and licensing laws.

- Capcom, the Japanese coin-op company behind Commando, Ghosts



'n' Goblins and Strider, has been floated on the Tokyo stock exchange.

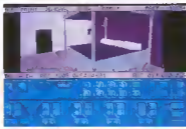
- Images of Andrew Fletcher, Martin Gorn and Alien Wilder from hard-synth Besilidon band, Depeche Mode, are appearing in a dream-like CD-ROM adventure game for the aging Japanese PC-SB01SR computer. Minors also incorporates personalities from Duran Duran and Max Headroom. The game costs 9800 yen (approximately £40). Minors is currently being transferred to the FM Towns.



- Home Data has converted the world's most odd-ball coin-op into the Fujitsu FM Towns computer. Merbie Madness is regarded by many players as Atari Games' best ever arcade game. It's also available on the Sharp X68000 and PC-9801.

- Work has just begun on the Super Famicom version of the ACE-Rated Powermonger. Top Japanese games house, Imagineer, is handling the tough job of converting Bulfrog's superlative strategy game. Imagineer previously converted Populous onto the Super Famicom and Maxis' 6th City onto the Sega MegaDrive.

- Special thanks to our friends at ASCII Corporation for their help.



3DCK on the CPC is an impressive achievement for an 8-bit version.

DIY WORLDS

Soon you'll be able to build your own 3D animated universe with Domark/Incentive's new 3D Construction Kit...

There's no doubt about it, this could be the most impressive game creation utility ever released. Not only does it allow you to create run-time modules complete with animation, shoot-em-up capability, puzzle solving, and maze exploration — but it enables you to do it all in agile 3D, using a system that's even better than Freespace!

Incentive have already brought out two well-known game construction utilities: GAC and STAC. GAC was notable for being the first fully-integrated graphic adventure creator and STAC did the same thing, but with more features, on the Atari ST. However, both these games had one big drawback: they could only create adventures, and in that respect they lost out seriously to products like Mendenhall's AMOS and Palace's Shoot-Em-Up Construction Kit which could be used by non-

programmers to produce more conventional game types.

No such problem with 3D Construction Kit. When Incentive first launched their Freespace solid 3D system in the form of Drifter, and followed it up with the very successful Castle Master, the company demonstrated a convincing lead in the creation of 3D world environments. Now, they've put all their resources into 3DCK, giving everybody the chance to build their own 3D universes — to a standard even higher than before. What's more it'll be available for Amiga, ST, PC and 8-bit formats as well.

LEGO FOR GAMESTERS

You can create, edit, and manipulate 3D solid polygonal shapes via a user-friendly control panel. Triangles, cubes, hexagons, and pentagons can be generated and combined to form more complex or irregular shapes, each having its own position and status in your 3D environment. What's more, all objects can have conditions and animations associated with them, enabling you to build up a complete game.

Above the control panel is a window onto the world you're building. You can move about this world during the editing process, either examining what you've done or adding/editing other objects. For example, you can add a cube which will then appear in front of you. Then you can shrink, rotate, stretch and otherwise change its shape until it's just the way you want it. You then place it in exactly the right position, give it a name (makes editing easier later), and perhaps place a triangle on top and some rectangles on the side to make it look like a house. Although you're limited to regular polygons, you can in fact combine picture elements and use a "transparent" option to create some very complex game elements.

3DCK is a very powerful system and allows you to create environments that are actually a lot more detailed and complex than those in, say, CastleMaster. One other big point in 3DCK's favour is that it is very memory efficient. Objects take up only a few bytes and even a



Steve Lee Anderson building a virtual world created by 3DCK and demonstrating the power of the "transparent" option. For further details of this movie, see ACE 1991 April issue.

THE FUTURE STARTS HERE!

ACE astrologer Rik Haynes with your stars for the coming year...



CAPRICORN
December 21-January 19

Creative urges burst the bubble of mediocrity surrounding your life. The idea of a game construction kit will be more appealing than ever before. Think it through before you start your project, does the guardian sprite of the end of level two take too many shots to kill?



AQUARIUS
January 20-February 18

You're restless and probably more susceptible to new gameplay techniques. You'll receive stern warnings from an older player. Your year is full of cheerful introductions. You won't find a better time than April to get something off

your chest by writing into Tricks 'o' Tactics.



PISCES
February 19-March 20

Try to solve Virgo's problem before the Sun moves onto a new sign. It's likely that you can do best by being optimistic. You deserve something better than your collection of Magnetic Scrolls games, perhaps you should try something a little more adventurous?



ARIES
March 21-April 20

Don't get too emotional when playing arcade platform games, remember to be careful when making a jump. Rather a slow summer but the Moon will be in a fellow Earth sign by the beginning of September. You'll be at your wits' end by the end of the year.



TAURUS
April 21-May 20

A romantic, fun, sociable year ahead of you... but that's modern now. Though you must stop hogging all the multiples in horizontally-scrolling shoot-em-ups. Wait and think it through before purchasing that joystick with revolutionary macro-switches which caught your eye in the January sales. Will it be compatible with your new console?



GEMINI
May 21-June 20

This is no time to relax. Consult an expert at your local arcade for support and guidance in these troubled times. Stay clear of low-scoring coin-ops. You really can't juggle your entire life around visits to the arcades. Stay clear of jackpot machines and dodgy-looking characters in dirty games. A pole locc reveals your hidden layer of shooting power.

NEWS

really complex world – a house complete with rooms and furniture, for example – could be squeezed into under 10K. 3DCK games can be really BIG.

VIRTUAL ACTION

Once you've defined your world and set up all the game conditions, you can then use the program's other features to generate a proper run-time module. Incentive will not be charging any royalties on games produced using the system, so there's no reason why we shouldn't see some superb 3D home brew environments on the market.

Games created using the system can be even more impressive thanks to 3DCK's ability to import image files (e.g. Deluxe Paint or Neo-Chrome pictures) which can be used to create a border around the window onto your 'world'. Even better, 3DCK can create dynamic displays such as score tables and energy graphs and you can configure parts of your border as control buttons for the player to use to move around the environment, pick up objects, and so on. You could even use 3DCK to create a (rather slow, admittedly) solid 3D flight sim game!

When it comes to sound, the program allows you to load in your own samples, as well as providing a range of default sound effects. Again, a sound can be associated with an object or an action so that, for example, shooting an object would not only generate an estimated explosion sequence but also call up the appropriate sample.

Speed is not 3DCK's strong point and the more complex the worlds you create, the slower the progress runs, but having said that it is still just as fast as many commercial 3D world games on the market. In addition, there are ways to ensure that the frame rate stays as high as possible – colouring some faces of objects as transparent, for example, so that the rendering process is speeded up.

3DCK is due for release in April. Prices will be £49.95 for the Amiga and PC formats, £39.99 for the ST, and £24.99 for C64, CPC and Spectrum. All 8-bit formats will be available on cassette and disk.



The incentive crew (clockwise from top left) Bruce Ian Andrew, programmers Kevin Larkin and Paul Gregory and graphics designer Eugene Messia. Incentive's offices are in Silverstone – a show's show from the infamous Atomic Weapons Establishment. If the button gets pressed, this lot will be the first to go!



The Amiga version of 3DCK costs a hefty £49.95, you'd better have a go on this 16-bit computer to see if you can afford it! This screen was taken from the collector of scabbage designed by the programming team. Yes, you CAN open the drawers and look inside!

Incentive is working on a set of chips that allow access to real television pictures, will place a computer in a console and store sound. The 1750 video processor is one of the first multi-media chips and effectively shrinks Amiga's CPU boards into two silicon chips.



CANCER

June 21-July 20

Don't be nervous or over-anxious or you'll never get a competent partner for your favourite simultaneous two-player game. Business matters will go well in between visits to a computer show. Shoot 'em-ups over your favourite finder in December. You should soon be leading pleased with yourself.



LEO

July 21-August 21

Watch the way drivers sway in racing games and be ready to overtake them of a moment's notice. You have to choose whether to accept a very big opportunity. Will you enter that hi-score on the hard disk or wait for something a little better. You're tied to the initial F, could it be an extra fuel capsule in that racing sim.



VIRGO

August 22-September

A special birthday treat is in store and you could become the star of the show. Keep your diary dear from 5th to 8th September. This is the best time to travel to Earl's Court in London. The chance for excitement and bargains, the time to meet new friends and major celebrities.



LIBRA

September 23-October 22

The new Moon in May leads to a calmer period. It is due in the middle of the year. You want to snuggle up and spend time with your favourite console or computer game. Don't let these quieter times drag you down. A collectible pod can take a lot of dark disappointment out of your life.



SCORPIO

October 23-November 22

A time for change. Could it be a Nintendo Gameboy or Super Famicom? You could even be looking after an elderly friend, possibly a C64 or Spectrum. Maybe it's easy-come, easy-go. Someone who often beats your hi-score can trigger a stretch of good luck for you. Passwords are the prize winners now.



SAGITTARIUS

November 23-December 20

Venus is in your own sign so it's a good time to start a new party in your favourite role-playing game. August marks the start of a more honest approach, did you really find that secret level in Super Mario World? The 8th of December holds particular interest for you, it's the last '91 issue of ACE.

Amiga's Kick Off accelerator simulates a Jaring connected over to the Super Famicom, Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Master System and Megadrive consoles.

THE BUTTON HAS BEEN



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Letters

Midwinter scorned; Midwinter praised; grey Megadrives; the colour Game Boy rumour - ACE readers prove that the pen is mightier than the laser

IREVOLUTIONARY RPG THEORY

I have watched with interest the increasing number of people writing in to express their concerns about the current state of computer RPGs. I wholeheartedly agree with Tony Park's views on this subject. A computer game will never be a suitable replacement for a Dungeon Master.

I have this theory on what current (and foreseeable) computer RPGs are. They are... shoot-em-ups in disguise! Think for a moment what you do when you play a shoot-em-up. There are basically two things that you aim for: (1) keep playing until you have the skills necessary to complete the game and (2) amass weapons to help utilise the skills you have gained.

If you think about it, computer RPGs are practically the same! You must gain skills and attain weapons to help destroy the bad guys.

No computer game currently on the market is able to boast that it is an RPG. This, in reality, is false advertising and I think the industry should do something about it. I won't deny that I haven't played these games, I have, and I have found them enjoyable (especially *Bards Tale III* - good one, Inteplay) but there are absolutely NO elements of role-playing in them.

Justin Hawkins, South Australia

For the last time, I don't think anyone is claiming that CRPG's are the same as RPG's, but CRPG's have borrowed a terminology

and, to some extent, a structure from RPG's - they allow the user to create a persona with which to identify, and they confer certain statistical attributes upon that character. Furthermore, during encounters and exploration, the player has (restricted, I agree) freedom of choice as to tactics and direction. All this is a very limited borrowing, but it has to be acknowledged. A more accurate label might be 'RPG influenced', but it's a bit of a mouthful and, frankly, CRPG's deserve to be considered in their own right and not constantly subjected to meaningless and derogatory comparisons - you yourself admit that BTIII is a 'good game'. After all, nobody (thank God) complains that shoot em ups are not really shoot-em-ups because the real life experience of killing other beings is entirely different. No more 'CRPG's aren't real RPG's' letters, please.

COLOUR BOY

There's a rumour going round my school to the effect that next summer the Game Boy will come out in colour. Is this true? And if so, what price will it be?

Ralph Burton, Switzerland

Despite official denials by Nintendo, industry gossip does suggest that there is a colour Game Boy either in assistance or under development. Even if this is true, it is highly unlikely that it will be released before 1992 because of the continued success of the monochrome version. It such a unit were to be launched, it would probably cost less than £150.

INTERFOUL

What's happened to Interface, the subscribers' newsletter?? In Issue 38 you promised that the newsletter was almost ready and there would be bonus editions to make up for the delay. Let us know! Robert Phillips-Williams,ford

We've boobed, and we're sorry. Pre-Christmas deadlines simply made it impossible for us to complete the issues in time. They will be sent out in early January. Those whose subscriptions have expired in the last six months will also receive them as a special New Year present. Interface will then be a regular quarterly event for all subscribers.

GREY MEGADRIVES

I am writing with regard to the Shopwacht article in Issue 39 to express surprise that you actually considered it for inclusion, let alone printed it. Mr Longhorn is simply using scare tactics to stop himself losing business to all the so-called 'grey' importers of Megadrives. What on earth does he mean 'Think long-term forget the imported machines'? Both official and 'grey' hardware have got equally healthy futures, the latter perhaps even more so because it will have immediate access to all the latest Japanese releases which are unlikely to hit our shores for at least 6 months if not longer and there are bound to be games released in Japan that won't see the light of day in this country EVER.

It's very narrow minded to say that an imported machine will have all the software support of a 16K Spectrum. What about the forty or so imported games that are currently available (and the list is getting larger every month)? Sega's intended release schedule of 2 games a month will put the official machines way behind the imported ones. And even if forthcoming official releases won't work on the imported machines (which is very petty on Sega's part) there are still such things as adaptors to get around that problem. It's also untrue to say that you can expect to pay more for imported games - in reality (apart from the large data games like *Stones* and *Phantasy Star II*) all them come in at little more than £30.00 apiece.

So please, give it a little more thought before you agree to print articles containing this kind of subject matter. If things go on in this fashion, the general public will just say 'Right! That's it! I'm not going to buy any consoles from anyone' which really

will be bad news for everybody concerned

Julian Roche, Altrincham
 First, as regards Dirk's article, his views are his own and not necessarily those of the Editorial team - this should have been made clear at the end of his article (it was in the original copy) but was left out by mistake. We agree that, when official distribution policy results in a lessening of choice for the consumer, as it does here, then there's something seriously wrong. Furthermore, there is absolutely no confirmation of the rumour (quoted by Dirk Longhorn) that future official Megadrive software will be purpose written for UK machines and the therefore incompatible with grey imported models. Finally, who is selling these grey imports anyway? Sega, of course. No-one else, to our knowledge, manufactures Megadrives and sells them on the cheap in Japan, from which marketplace consumers are perfectly at liberty to buy them if they so choose.

SAVE OUR SCORES

I would like to know why some games have a saveable high score table and others don't? A saveable high score increases long term interest - even games like Double Dragon, which are easy to complete and therefore short on life expectancy, pull you back for just one more go to see if you can better your score.

Alastair Murray, Edinburgh

PC ENGINES, PLEASE

With regard to Douglas Innes' letter last month concerning the Sega Megadrive, I do not share his pessimism on the future of the machine, but I do disagree with ACE in choosing it as the best console to buy.

As we all know, Japan leads the way in the console market and it is therefore interesting to see that the most popular machine in Japan is not the Megadrive but the PC Engine. Of course this machine has been around longer and has consequently generated more software than the Sega, but the main reason for the poor demand for the Megadrive is that it is not seen as a vast improvement over the Engine and so far there have been far too many mediocre releases for it. Another reason is that all Japanese games freaks are eagerly awaiting the release of the Nintendo Super Famicom which should clean up, if Game Boy's success is anything to go by.

You may say so what? And who cares about what is popular in Japan? But if a machine doesn't succeed there then it is unlikely to get progressive development from the top developers and software won't vastly improve. I personally think the Megadrive is a great machine, but it

DOUBLE DISK DEALING

A plea to all software producers writing for double-sided STs: check it works on single-sided machines with a second double-sided drive! The list of offenders is long and includes companies who ought to know better (Rainbow Arts, Lucasfilms, I could go on...). Please remember that 2nd drives DO NOT BOOT.

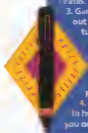
Name Witheld

(Please note that withholding names sometimes means that we will not publish your letter. If you've got a point of view, have the courage to put your name to it...)

THICK CITY

Yes, I think a lot of games are thick. The new game features I would like to see in future games are:-

1. More intelligent installation procedures. On installation, most games should be able to diagnose what type of PC you're installing it on and what options (eg VGA or EGA) for screens, hard disk drives etc it has available to pick from. These installation programs should be much more friendly and idiot proof.
2. This copy protection method of needing the original disk in your drive to invoke the game is very bad programming, design, and PR. Most games should have an individual number (and maybe buyer's name put in during installation) to make each copy unique and hence easier to track software pirates.
3. Games should allow you to print out information (like character status in RPG games) to make interaction with other players more fun. Players could also interact with the game makers by faxing status reports to get help or win prizes.
4. More games should have built-in help oracles. These would give you on-line help which could be



is overpriced by Virgin/Sega (it sells at around £100 in Japan and you can get them from

Hong Kong for around £65).

Of course, what you get is a guaranteed, properly configured machine and, wait for it... a machine that isn't compatible with grey imports! It seems wise to stick to the grey market and get all the latest software from Japan directly and often cheaper than Virgin plan to sell them for anyway. I do realise that many purchasers will not an official machine with English instructions with the games, but don't brainwash everyone by overhyping a machine which, to date, only has a couple of really playable fun games.

I advise people looking for a console to check out the PC Engine simply because it has better developers, better licenses, and better software (exactly what the Game Boy has over the Lynx). Take a look at recent releases such as Devil Crash Pinball, Formation Soccer (best multiplayer soccer game) and Don Doko Don. And then all the rest such as Ultimate Tiger, Bloody Wolf, and the superlative Tennis (I must say, however, forget Gunhed - it's ridiculously overrated).

Incidentally, one problem PC Engines and Megadrives has is the perennial PAL/SCART configuration of grey imports.

PAL machines run slower than SCART and have a boxed-in display on screen. It is always worth getting SCART (provided you've got a SCART monitor or TV - and watch out for SCART machines running at PAL speed - on old PC Engines).

Unfortunately, the SCART PC Engine usually needs a separate colour booster because the colours are very dark.

I'm not trying to start the dreaded rivalry that haunts the ST and Amiga - I just think that your portrayal of the console scene is one-sided and ignorant.

Jason Brookes, Cheshire

PS This would have been typed but I sold my Amiga to buy an Engine and CD ROM drive - you're right, you DO need both a console and a computer!

ACE's coverage of the PC Engine has recently been increased with the addition of the monthly PC Engine column in the Pink Pages. We'll also be increasing our coverage of new PCE titles in the New Year. At the end of the day, we still support the Megadrive - but we support individual choice even more. The Megadrive was our individual choice because the official launch and vast UK publicity spend over the next few months should ensure a good user base for the machine and the larger the user base, the more active the market becomes.

bought for points.

5. Game packaging should be more inventive. Instead of cardboard boxes why not sell games in nice hardback novels? Other ideas would be to include mapping sheets and note paper with the game logo on it or game stickers etc.

6. Game upgrades. Certain games need to be upgraded every so often - games like F19 Stealth Fighters for instance, which needs a new scenario upgrade for the Invasion of Kuwait! When games come out the makers should support them more, listen to user feedback, and then re-release them with all the new features. To get the upgrades at reduced cost, all people should have to do is send in the original master disk to prove previous purchase.

7. Networks. Why are games not coming out in network versions? Novell and numerous other networking systems are becoming so common and some games would be ideal on a network. A Dungeons and Dragons game with numerous opponents, or a war or flight simulator with human opponents would greatly add to the diversity and fun.

Michael Byrne, Cork

Absolutely, although some of your points are more applicable to PCs. As yours and other letters this month demonstrate, it's often the little touches in programming that matter.

New Year, New Rating

ACE is blazing a new trail into 1991 with a completely new award for the hottest games. As you know, we've been awarding ACE Rated nominations to 700+ games since the early days but we've now decided to create a special award to make it clear WHY those games particularly appeal to ACE readers. A 900+ game is hitting new standards for advanced computer entertainment - hence the new award, the ACE Trailblazer, for games that take you into new dimensions of gameplay.



MIDWINTER RIGHTLY RATED...

I would like to publicly congratulate Mike Singleton and Reinbird on producing one of the best games I have ever played. I would recommend Midwinter to anyone with an ST or Amiga, even though a friend and I did manage to complete it quite quickly. We chose the easiest method of completion by not making a large team. However, we still return to the game just to watch the graphic sequence: especially the cable car entering a station.
Paul Garrish

INSTANT SUNSHINE

Defeating General Masters is simple: hang-glide. The only person you need is Stark and the only equipment you require is a box of dynamite.

Start the game (preferably as far South as possible), then take Stark to the nearest weapons dump and collect some dynamite. Then take him to a cable car station that goes up a high mountain. When at the top, set off on the hang glide along the mountain ridges. Use the map screen to plan your route and simply travel along the ridges towards the corner of the island where Masters has his base.

It's quite easy (practice makes perfect) to hang glide off the way to the base even with spotter planes and mortars. If you crash or are shot down, just ski to a new cable car station and carry on. All that remains for you is to plant the dynamite and blow Masters sky high.

William Hodgkinson, Bloxham

Reminds me of cracking Lords of Midnight by taking Markin on his own up the Eastern side of the map - but that was rather more difficult. I admit it's pretty easy to crack Midwinter once you know how, but how long did it take you to work this out? Or did you stumble on this solution by luck?

USE THAT RAM

I own an Amiga A500 and some months ago purchased an A501 RAM pack. For practical purposes, the additional memory allows me greater freedom and range, but it is hardly ever taken advantage of by the vast majority of software titles that I own. For example, in Xenon II, a reload is required whenever you enter the shop, and the soundtrack during play has fewer samples (not just because one channel is used for sound effects). Similarly, Shadow of the Beast is interrupted at intervals for additional data to be loaded.

Anthony Grech, Southampton

MIDWINTER WRONGLY

I am announcing the start of a long needed campaign... to get all companies that supply us with games, seasons programs, as whatever, to print the bloody labels the correct way up!

As all mentally competent people will tell you, a label is the right way no you can read it with the sliding protective cover downwards. Anything else simply isn't kosher.

That's because when you sit (b) down in your cosy little disk box, and then return later to give the little blighter some exercise, you don't know who or where it is, because all the labels are upside down.

And next, a complaint. How can Midwinter possibly deserve 948? It deserves no more than 800.

The strategy in Midwinter amounts to no more than deciding whether to get Davy Hart, an 11 year old pimply brat, still at school (or at least he should be) to cross, ALL ALONE, the equivalent of the Himalayas armed only with a set of skis and a peanut butter sandwich.

948 for a game that lets you see snow, through 32 people's eyes.

948 for a game that, after logging to get 26 people in my team

(although as any honest games will tell you, the maximum number of people that can be moved in any one turn, without nodding off, is 6) and finally defeating the enemy. I managed to win the game with Stark on his own in a matter of a few turns.

948 for a game where the residents - all 32 of them - are as thick as Neil Kinnock. I had one character stay in a settlement to protect the heatmine, as an enemy unit went nearby, and while going from the garage to the house to get some food, he totally failed to notice 30 enemy vehicles attack and capture the settlement.

I will admit that the game tried to be a step in the right direction, but Maelstrom must have tied it to the left shoe of a member of the ministry for silly walks. Come on ACE, pull your fingers out. Let's not get engrossed with all the hype and backhanders, let's be objective when rating - you're giving far too many games ACE RATED status.

But most importantly, let's continue this campaign to get all the labels put the right way up.

Paul Kerslake, Swansco

The ACE rated status is now changing over to ACE Trailblazer (see elsewhere on these pages) and one result of the will be that games will have to be even hotter to win this new coveted award



You don't get that many games with the likes of Freud, Rasputin and H.G. Wells included.

Last year could be thought of as the best yet for fantasy role-playing games. First there was *Ultima V* with its improved icon interface and wonderful graphics and sound. Then came *Savage Empire*, the premier for a new series of games based around the *Ultima V* gaming system. Every *Worlds of Ultima* release has its own unique story plot and characters. Both games were an ACE-Rated step ahead of the rest.

With two *Ultima* titles and Chris Roberts' outstanding *Wing Commander*, Origin was on a roll. Many believe this Texas-based company to be the software house of 1990. Now Origin is working on *Martian Dreams*, the next *Worlds of Ultima* game. So will 1991 be an even better time for fantasy role-playing fans?

MOVE OVER CYBERPUNK

Martian Dreams has possibly the most exciting and imaginative scenario ever devised for a game. It mixes Victorian personalities and Jules Verne technology in a fusion of fact and fiction which Origin laughingly dubs Steampunk.

The producer of *Martian Dreams*, Warren Spector, is in charge of around 25 game designers, artists, musicians, sound effects specialists, testers, writers and programmers working on this ambitious project. Spector is one of the most experienced role-playing game designers and writers in America. Before joining Origin, he worked for Steve Jackson Games and TSR, the company responsible for the *Dungeons & Dragons* series of products. "I'm head whp-cracker," says Spector as he leans back in the most comfortable chair in the building.

Warren Spector and Jeff George, *Martian Dreams*' Project Leader, were still ironing the creases out of the game's plot during my visit to Origin's 16,000 square foot air-conditioned building in Austin, the state capital of Texas.

WAR OF THE WORLDS

"You travel back in time to the 1890's and flee to Mars, where you interact with real, historical figures, uncover the secrets of an extinct Martian race, struggle with Victorian technology, gain special abilities, defeat it

MARTIAN DREAMS

Why are Grigori Rasputin, H.G. Wells and Sigmund Freud going on a mission to Mars? Rik Haynes steps back in time to preview the next *World of Ultima*...



...of the steampunk-embellished brain-machine at the beginning of the game.

creatures generated by a dream machine, and rescue a lost Mars expedition," says Jeff George in his early design proposal for *Martian Dreams*. It seems a Mars a Day helps you work, rest and play with dream machine Id beings!

The story so far: In 1893, Nikola Tesla—America's most brilliant eccentric genius—Is instructed to build a space cannon near Chicago. The launch to Mars is scheduled to take place in conjunction with Chicago's World Exhibition to be held later that year. The show did actually take place in real life, minus the space cannon of course! Back to the plot. While a wide variety of dignitaries from the time go on a tour of the capsule during a gala celebration, the cannon is accidentally fired and a group of scientists, captains of industry, entertainers and politicians are prematurely hurled to Mars. Despite the launch was no accident, the power Pantry and vision-driven Grigori Rasputin arranged the unfine launch of the capsule with himself co-board.

Fortunately the newly-armed Martians can, at least in theory, construct a ship to return to Earth. After a brief period of panic, the travelers settle down to the business of exploring their new environment and establishing a settlement on Mars. Their progress is relayed to Earth via giant signaling mirrors.

All goes well for the first few months, with reports of many wonders found in the Martian cities and the discovery of a Dream Machine which allows a person to enter the realm of dreams while fully awake. You emerge with complete memories of your dream experiences. But messages start to



The computer-generated crowd incorporates people from the real Chicago exhibition back in 1893!

report of sickness and insanity among the humans on the planet. Finally, after six months, all communication with Mars suddenly stops. It's now up to you to lead a rescue mission and save the first Mars expedition...

WORLDS UP

Martian Dreams is basically a game filled with moral dilemmas like many of the Ultima adventures before it. "You, like all humans, must confront and control the evil in yourself," explains Jeff George. "This evil is represented in the game by the Id creatures released by the Dream Machine."

But the buck doesn't stop with the Id creatures. "Technology used and abused

without the benefits of caution, wisdom and understanding, leads to disaster." Do I see shades of green appearing in this game? But the Id creatures do have a lot to answer for. "The use of the mind-altering escapist devices for empty pleasure is ultimately self-destructive," Jeff George adds. "On many levels, the *Martian Dream Machine* is metaphor for the recreational pharmaceuticals in our own world." Top on this, I think he means illegal drugs. Origin may even incorporate a Just-Say-No message in the game.

You just don't get this level of complexity in the average shoot-'em-up do you! And I haven't even mentioned the Plurimulal creatures, human survivalists, oxygen for breathing in the thin Martian atmosphere, Rasputin's insane scheming or the Martians' plans to invade the Earth!

The imaginative story, complex game-plot, advanced character interaction, rich personalities, and extraordinary Victorian visuals make *Martian Dreams* one of the ACE team's most eagerly-awaited games for 1991. The game is initially being developed on PC format, though Super Famicom, Amiga, PC CD-ROM and CDTV adaptations are also likely. *Martian Dreams* should be finished before the autumn, ACE will be bringing you more exclusive reports on the game's progress over the coming months.

"The use of the mind-altering escapist devices for empty pleasure is ultimately self-destructive," Jeff George adds.

Martin Spanier, producer of Martian Dreams

"We want to score people with invisible monsters. You won't know where your enemy is."

Jeff George, Martian Dreams' Project Leader

ORIGIN'S ORIGINS

Origin was founded in 1984 by a team of four—the brothers Robert and Richard Gornoff, their friend and software author Charles Bueche, and their father and ex-NASA astronaut Owen Gornoff. The company is situated off the Wild Basin Road in North-West Austin, Texas. Origin directly employs 55 people and has. In the last seven years, invested over 10 million dollars in the development of new products, computer hardware, cross-development systems and support equipment. This leading American games developer has produced 30 titles for all the major home computer formats including PC, G4, Apple II, Macintosh, Amiga and ST. Until last year Origin's most famous products were Richard Gornoff's immensely popular series of Ultima fantasy role-playing games. These have now been joined by Wing Commander (currently the best selling game in the West) and World of Ultima. Through association with Japanese Nintendo developers and publishers, Origin has converted some of its titles onto Nintendo consoles. Additionally, Origin is itself developing Ultima products for the Nintendo Entertainment System and Gameboy. Origin is also looking towards the future with exciting new games and adaptations being planned for Nintendo's Super Famicom 32-bit console and various Compact Disc entertainment platforms. This isn't bad going when you consider that two years ago Richard Gornoff was selling his first game, *Alknothek*, in a plastic bag with photocopied instructions!



Richard Gornoff (right)—with Richard Gornoff—in a moment from the party-line...



EVERY ONE A MICRO

THE GAMES ARE GREAT THE OFFER'S A GIFT.



▼ **F-19 Stealth Fighter** is the 'plane they can't keep under wraps. It has soared to the top of the Gallup charts, receiving review rating after review rating above 90%.

▼ "Fast smooth and technically sophisticated. The four mission territories, cold war, conventional and limited war situations plus the selection of available options translate into a huge number of different missions - each with its own level of enemies, radar installations and alerted bases to face. Flying a successful operation draws on a variety of different skills - radar negotiation, bombing accuracy, air-to-air improvisation and plane handling skills. Presentation, right down to the expansive manual, is impeccable throughout. For strategic depth and variety of gameplay, there's very little to touch it." **The One July 90**

▶▶▶▶▶ **FREE T SHIRT OR MUG WITH THESE GAMES**

Midwinter earned its title as "Strategy Game of the Decade" by freezing out the opposition to head the Gallup charts and by receiving accolade after accolade from the Press.

"Many games are billed as 'revolutionary', but **Midwinter** is probably the closest you are going to get to the title. Whilst the presentation is superb, it is the superb gameplay that sets it apart from other 'classics'. Although your task is to destroy the evil General Masters, the gameplay allows you to perform the task in whatever manner you deem appropriate. As you put together a strong team with varying skills that actually have a bearing on the game, any method can be used to kill Masters. Couple this with four modes of transport, numerous missions, and an involving storyline, you have a game that really does live up to its classification." **ST Action May 90**



▶▶▶▶▶ **FREE T SHIRT OR MUG WITH THESE GAMES**



▲ **Rick Dangerous II** charts the return of everyone's favourite hero, back in a flash to fight the Fat Man and find favour with fun lovers everywhere.

▲ "By now, **Rick Dangerous** has earned its place in the hall of fame for classic platform games, but just when everyone was taking it for granted, along comes the sequel - and its even better than the original. The graphics have been polished up, the sound effects are funnier and the gameplay is more fluid and enjoyable. With a little thought all the puzzles can be worked out (and some of the solutions are very strange!). Even if you haven't played the original game (where have you been?) **Rick Dangerous II** is well worth a generous slash of any game-player's time. But a generous slash could have you sitting in front of your computer for days without rest. You have been warned....hut hut it anyway." **Amiga Format Nov 90**

▶▶▶▶▶

PROSE GOODIE...

FREE T SHIRT OR MUG WHILE STOCKS LAST.

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CLAIM YOUR FREE GIFT WHEN YOU PURCHASE F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER, MIDWINTER, OR RICK DANGEROUS II FROM ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TOP SOFTWARE STORES:



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EPIC

Look out *Wing Commander!* DIGITAL IMAGE DESIGN and OCEAN are preparing to launch a space-sim packing 400 polygons per second, enormous space battles and over 70 different types of spacecraft. Rik Haynes walks 'round the hangar-bay for a preview...

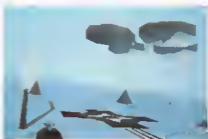
Nothing ever goes as originally planned, Epic started back in February 1989 when Microdeal wanted a three-dimensional version of Goldrunner. The talented trio of Martin Kenwright, Phil Alsopp and Russ Payne were eager to oblige the Cornwall-based company - forming Digital Image Design to handle the job. But it's never that easy. Microdeal suddenly pulled out of the games industry. Digital Image Design had the rights to the game and looked for another publisher.

The original concept was revamped. Ocean on the look out for high-quality original product, quickly snapped it up. Goldrunner 3D became Epic. Meanwhile, Digital Image Design desperately needed cash and Ocean wanted a flight sim. The award-winning F-29 Retaliator resailed. Finally, Digital Image Design had the chance to write Epic.

EIGHT GAMES IN ONE

So it begins. The human race is on the verge of extinction. There's going to be a supernova, the entire star system is going to be destroyed. The humans want to escape to safety in the next solar system. Unfortunately, this will be seen as an act of war by the ruling Rexxon Empire next door.

Like *Battlestar Galactica* (a sci-fi movie come TV series), the human fleet masses for the flight to survival. Only the spaceships in Epic have been specially constructed for the trip. The busy human survivalists have built two massive motherships and a unique ship to protect the fleet called the Epic starfighter. Basically the game is a breakout of 60 million people across 50 light years of enemy territory. And you're in-charge of kicking Rexxon bunt in an Epic fighter. Your fleet consists of agriculture ships, civilian transports, fuel tankers, ordnance carriers, freighters, etc. Each ship plays a vital role in the game.



More action, planetlife. Ten bulky transporters head in to land at a ground base.

THE TRAILS OF SPACE FLIGHT

How do you fly in space was an important question for Digital Image Design. Should they go for an Elite-style rocket-thruster craft or an F-29 in space? "We've just abandoned everything," says Martin Kenwright. "We created a starfighter that scrolls beautifully and has nice inertia. You bank and your ship swings. You've got rocket boosters to throw you out of an area, space brakes which really slam in and a heli-pin turn - your craft can effectively spin round on the spot."

"We're trying to run a movie-inspired game," says Martin Kenwright at Digital Image Design. "We looked at the classic Star Wars films and saw their technical realisation - the superb objects, effects and feeling of movement through space. We want to try and create a reality. We're trying to be the first believable flight sim in space. Only it's not just space, it's live planets as well. Epic is eight separate games rolled into one."

During the game you get the chance to visit a variety of planets with their own atmosphere and surface objects. Each planet has proper terrain with mountains, craters, volcanoes with surface objects including monorail and motorway networks, alien cities. Some objects are animated, such as the rotating gun batteries and massive bat file tanks which move around the planet's surface firing anti-missiles and launching fighters.

BREAKING THE BARRIERS

Digital Image Design has created over 10Mb of graphics data for its latest release... hardly surprisingly when you consider Epic is filled with movie-like animated sequences throughout the game. "We've got a big glossy intro with some nice tiling screens using bitmap graphics, hand-drawn screens, sprites, animated backdrops and vector graphics overlaid on-top," Kenwright confirms. "We call these Introgens, created with our custom-made design editor. Hopefully these sequences will bring the game to life. We can take proper DFant panoramic backdrops, scroll and fully animate them (stars twinkling, lights turning on and off, blast doors opening and closing, moving cars or Marsoid systems, etc), add text and simultaneously draw over a dozen moving 3D objects."

Digital Image Design's graphics engine has some of the fastest 3D routines ever seen in an Amiga or ST game - with an average of 400 polygons per second. A good example is your Epic fighter with approximately 120 polygons, a similar number of polygons, and on average it goes 14-16 frames a second on the Amiga (it's slightly faster on the ST). Some preliminary groundwork on the PC is running at an amazing 50 frames. "Our 3D is the best," proclaims Kenwright.

In addition to the usual supply of polygon triangles and rectangles, Epic has got discs, spheres and different kinds



Planet duty. An Epic starfighter pulls away from its home camp as the off-duty ship's course leads far across well-guarded R&B.



As you can see from this shot of one of the greatest vehicles, the level of polygon generated detail is incredible - and so for the speed...

of bustling effects like see-through objects. 'Spheres are dead easy to do, you just draw a blob on the screen, but discs are very complex in 3D,' explains Kenwright. 'Although anybody can buy a textbook and find out how to do it, the difficulty is getting it down to run as fast as possible.'

This brand-new code is the thing that's caused delays. 'You can't just sit back with your 3D engine, you always have to do better in your next game - it's what people expect. Gameplayers get bored very quickly,' Kenwright offers. Digital Image Design has been experimenting with texture mapping producing some bark and water effects on the PC. 'It's just a case of priorities. First, we want fractal landscapes to fly over like you saw in Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn. It may sound ludicrous now but it's not far off.' The process of writing a 3D game is unbelievably time-consuming. It takes Digital Image Design three to four days to design each three dimensional shape used in the game. 'Our shapes take three or four times longer to produce because our system is so complex - it's optimised for speed, not ease of use,' Kenwright sighs.

Russ Payne, Phil Alsopp and Andy Torlington are programming Epic. Martin Kenwright is in charge of concept and design. Paul Hollywood and a few other people are providing additional design. David Whittaker has developed the music and sound FX, including some sampled speech and neat warp drive spot-effects.

Epic is the first game where bitmap and polygon graphics have been so successfully combined. Kenwright is amazed anyone has tried this technique before. The ST and Amiga versions of Epic should be ready for release by the beginning of spring, the PC adaption will follow later in the year. Epic is huge, incorporating nearly every type of space warfare imaginable - from individual strikes to massive battles between over a thousand spaceships. It takes you four hours to fly across a world - going at full speed - because Digital Image Design use full 32-bit 3D. The game is never the same from the end of mission one. It can branch to completely opposite scenarios - with 'Meanwhile...' movie sequences keeping you updated on the appropriate story. With the Reaxon's in hot pursuit, your race for survival could take 30 years!

TAKE THE KENWRIGHT CHALLENGE

Martin Kenwright is sick of hearing every games developer say they've got the fastest three-dimensional routines. 'If anybody out there thinks they've got the fastest 3D, get in touch with me. We'll get together in a room, each of us can slap a thousand pounds down on the table, and we'll see who's the fastest,' smirks the confident Kenwright.



Tutty going... big, detailed and fast! Still the best for a top 3D poly, see generated game!



'Death Vectors' attacks the smaller alien, entirely. The alien are playing 'Guess the Quets' aboard their base ship.

'3D games are a fine balance. If you put in too much definition the game starts chugging and it becomes unplayable. Epic is just full of action.'

Martin Kenwright

The fleet of Reaxonian humans approaches the orbital buffer zone between the Terrain and Reaxon systems. Be warned! The Reaxons don't want you on their patch!



The Reaxon fleet is almost a year of play, searching the hyperspace you try to bring the ship around so that you can look on to the alien target.

'A very good space game though you never go near a planet and it never uses vector graphics. It's a great game for people with three thousand pound machines. Epic is for the masses.'

Martin Kenwright in Wing Commander

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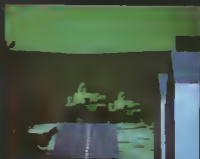
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The character Mighty Bomb Jack is depicted in a dynamic, action-oriented pose. He is wearing his signature blue, metallic-looking helmet with a large, curved horn on the right side. His face is partially obscured by a mask with glowing yellow eyes. He is holding a large, red, lit bomb in his right hand, with bright yellow sparks and light emanating from the fuse. The background is dark, making the character and the glowing elements stand out.

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elite



Almost there! A little to the lower left and I'll let them have it!

WAR GAMES

Today the British Army uses military simulations to train its tank crews, tomorrow you could be playing them in your local arcades. Rik Haynes goes on reconnaissance in GEC-Marconi's sim-labs in Scotland...

Sweat pours down the back of my spine as I survey the surrounding battlefield. Out of the shadows, three Russian T-80 main battle tanks trundle towards me in classic formation. Pressing hard on the right joystick fire button, I line-up my first target. The cross-hair locks-on to my unsuspecting victim. A flick of a switch and crucial laser range-finder data fades onto my HUD display. I confirm my shot and the turret elevates, automatically taking care of the ballistics. A smooth feel of the trigger and away we go.

Perfect hit - a pile of useless Russian metal stands dead in its tangled tracks. A cloud of smoke drifts up, the spirit of a Soviet tank crew now free to roam the countryside. The remaining T-80s break formation and start their witch hunt. Quickly swinging my turret to the left, I foolishly overshoot the next T-80 turkey. Priceless seconds are lost as the Russians release two rounds, screaming towards me at supersonic speeds.

The first falls short, pounding the ground in front of my tank into a white-hot fusion of earth and metal. A nanosecond later the second shell lands. More accurate than its predecessor, it wipes out a multi-million British Challenger 2 tank. Crew survival is rated at only 23%. Game Over. My first attempt at 'playing' GEC-Marconi's new tank-gunners simulation produced mixed results. If only I had some multiple pulse blasters or a smart bomb!

Tanks, Planes and Arcade Games

Eat your hearts out, Battlezone fans, because GEC-Marconi is developing a tank gunnery simulation for the British Army superior to anything yet played in the

Tanks a Million

Battle-Vu is the gunnery system that GEC-Marconi hopes the British Army will adopt to train its tank crews in the future. If they get the contract it will be worth in excess of £30 million. "Our Battle-VU simulation has been designed as a precision gunnery training system which faithfully replicates the gunner's and commander's stations of a main battle tank. Trainees can practice engagements in real-time, authentically reproducing the real world environment," says GEC-Marconi. "Battle-Vu provides a high-fidelity simulation of the gunner's and commander's sights, through which the 1024-line colour monitor display units are viewed. The external scenario and targets are entirely modelled in 3D so giving total freedom of movement to your vehicle for aiming or troop configurations."

Battle-Vu's technical specifications are very impressive. The system has dual 83060 P86 processors each running at 25MHz, 16Mb of main memory and a 780Mb hard disk. Eight graphics pipelines provide geometry, scan conversion and display sub-systems. The whole set-up is connected to a simulation computer and instructor station via an Ethernet link.

"All targets are fully three-dimensional objects which can be viewed from any location," confirms GEC-Marconi. "Targets contain sufficient detail so that recognition between types is possible at the appropriate ranges. Battle-Vu gives a Moving View Vehicle capability with complete freedom to move, and traverse and elevate sight directions. The Battle-Vu visual system provides varying levels of smoke, fog and cloud together with seasonal effects. Battle-Vu's sound effects system creates FX for your own vehicle engine, turret movement and vehicle motion; your own fire with all types of ammunition; commander's instructions and digitised audio loader's responses; returns fire."

"Battle-Vu can be data linked in three's or four's to operate in concert in the same way as a troop of real tanks - including radio-net communications. Courseware supplied by Marconi Simulation for Battle-Vu comprises almost 1400 exercises and is supplemented by an automated record system which captures data from individual students, controls their progression through their particular curriculum, prints results and allows statistical analysis." All this could be yours for a cool million pounds.

arcades. It's like comparing the line-vector graphics seen in Alan's classic arcade game with real video footage of tank warfare. Based around Silicon Graphics' supercomputer visual technology, this simulation can deliver one million polygons per second, with a polygon-fill rate of 200 million pixels per second. Peak pixel performance or what? Even the user controls for GEC-Marconi's simulation resemble a proper tank turret, with two multi-function joysticks and a binocular sight system.

Don't despair. GEC-Marconi is planning to join the coin-op club producing arcade game versions of its military simulations. Who knows, it could even go the other way - Sega, Konami and Alan might produce budget simulators of nuclear submarines... provided you don't mind the odd spritz splash as you unleash your store of megadeath missiles.

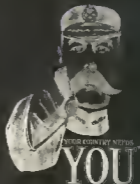
The idea of one of the world's leading military suppliers turning its attention to creating video games seems a little strange at first, but the concept is hardly surprising when you discover that Dr Les Grant, the General Manager of GEC-Marconi's simulation facilities in Fife, Scotland, is a veteran gamer/player. "The Kick Off series is incredible," enthuses Grant. Watch out Dino Dini (the creator of Kick Off), you may end up writing arcade games based around a submarine's periscope or running a nuclear power station,



Three Soviet T-80 main battle tanks line-up for the slaughter...

"Grandam's Hunt for Red October is technically accurate and feels right."

Les Grant, General Manager of GEC-Marconi Simulation



both of which have already been done by GEC-Marconi for the Dutch Navy and British Nuclear Fuels, respectively.

Grant tried to get GEC-Marconi involved in the arcade games industry back in the early 80s, when Pioneer first launched its videodisc system. Unfortunately, he was pipped at the post by Don Buell and his Dragon's Lair laserdisc adventure. The reason behind GEC-Marconi's change of heart is the shock from the collapse of the communist Eastern Block circulating through NATO's military establishment. The Iraqis may have provided a stop-gap, but the writing is clearly on the bunker wall - manufacturers of military kit will have to diversify their business if they're to survive into the next century.

If GEC-Marconi's new venture is successful, we could see other military contractors join the game-plan. The next generation of arcade gamemasters could be drawing M1 Abrams tanks around Iraq deserts, flying B2 Stealth missions over North Korea and talking out South American drug barons in Apache helicopter gunships - using dedicated sim consoles from the likes of General Dynamics, Lockheed and Hughes Aircraft. Of course you'd have to sign the Official Secrets Act as you enter the arcade - and high scoring players would be automatically drafted into the armed forces. You have been warned.



Up your periscope, matey! GEC-Marconi's next tank gunnery simulation has the same technology used in its Porsche Simulator developed for the Dutch Navy.

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Digital Integration

Everything's virtual these days. The Battletech centre (soon to be set up in London and first covered in ACE back in August 1989) was labelled virtual in a weekly magazine. Ian Andrew of Incentive claims that his 3D Construction Kit enables you to construct your own virtual realities, and ACE editor Steve Cooke is reported to exist in a permanent virtual 1969. Of these uses of the word, only the last one seems to have the ring of truth. What's going on?

What's going on is one of the biggest bandwagons in recent techno-history and since ACE has been partly responsible for getting it rolling, we thought it a good idea to try and pin down exactly what we mean when we talk of virtual reality. After all, judging by some of the descriptions above, even a 3D shoot-em-up is a candidate for the virtual reality label and, as conceptual power-ups go, that one shouldn't be allowed to get off the ground.

Let's go to the horse's mouth. Dr Myron Krueger, the man who really got the VR ball rolling. We caught up with him at a conference in New York.

THE VIRTUAL PAST

The VR experience has been around since 1966 when a chap called Ivan Sutherland first developed a headset that allowed a user to examine a virtual room. Four years later Krueger was laying the foundations of the virtual experience with his Videoplace concept that sought to involve the user in a computer-manipulated experience.

Headset technology is very cumbersome and from the beginning my approach was completely different, argues Krueger. The human isn't evolving at all and the computer is evolving faster than any technology in history. So clearly the interface to the computer has got to be the human itself - any adaptation you make to the computer is going to be obsolete in a couple of years.

Krueger's approach, therefore, is to get away from designing ever more complex input devices, like VPL's Dataglove. One of his first set-ups was back in 1971 when he constructed a sensory floor with hundreds of monitoring devices linked to a computer. This floor formed the basis of a whole series of interactions ranging from configuring it as a musical keyboard to setting up an on-screen maze that people had to negotiate on the floor.

Sutherland's headset and Krueger's floor form the two complementary foundations of virtual reality - you could call them bolt-on and born here respectively. Sutherland's work has evolved into workstations like the W Industries and (see last month's ACE) and products from VPL and Sense 8 in the States. Krueger's floor has inspired creations ranging from the Subjective Technologies Existential Funhouse (seen in prototype form at the ACE Living Room of the Future) and Vivid Effect's Mandala system.

It seems likely that these two strands of VR research will continue on their separate



Ivan Sutherland's original work nearly 25 years ago has spawned dozens of research projects, each following the 'bolt-on/born here' philosophy of VPL. This is VPL's set-up in action.

Building new worlds

ACE continues its journey into the future with a definition of virtual reality, an interview with Jaron 'Cyberspace' Lanier, a glimpse at new developments in interactive fiction, and a trip to Virtual Egypt...

ways to create some time. Krueger admits that the 'born free' approach of having no cumbersome hardware and allowing the user to prance about in sensitised space requires almost an almost utopian degree of technology, but it does have obvious attractions. The bolt-on-bits brigade, however, can argue that an equally Utopian technology could produce bolt-ons that were barely discernible by the user. The most likely outcome is that the two will meet virtually halfway.

SO WHAT'S VIRTUAL?

Meanwhile, Krueger has done us a big favour. He's come up with a definition of virtual reality that we at ACE reckon sets the boundaries for this sort of experience and makes it quite clear what is virtual and what isn't.

Talking of his Sensory Floor, he told us that I did it that way (using sensors)

because I didn't want the computer to get input from the user. I wanted it to perceive the user. In fact, I didn't think any longer of a user, I thought of a participant in a computer experience.



Krueger's concept of sensor-mediated virtual experience has led to the development of systems like Videoplace (see ACE #6), which combines video and computer technology to put you in the 'place'. Krueger pioneered this approach with a system that involved users in an on-screen battle with the 'big gorilla' back in 1969.

OK, so it could be argued that any old 3D game is a computer experience we can all participate in, but that's wrong. The key lies in Krueger's use of the words 'input' and 'perceive'—input is something the user does deliberately—you hit a button, you twist a joystick, you boogie with the Mouse. When you're not doing anything, the computer isn't receiving anything. In a VR system, even when the user isn't doing anything, the computer is still being inundated with information about his/her position, pulse rate, eye movement, or whatever the system is set up to monitor. This constant perceiving, or awareness of the human being is what makes the difference between a virtual reality system in which you can live/participate as opposed to a 3D environment which you use/control.

OK, so we lay down the law. Now write to us with your amendments...and stand by for a stunning ACE expose of the future of VR in the very near future.

MEET UNCLE BUDDY

Well, you won't, actually. Because Uncle Buddy has passed away. However, he appears to have left you the contents of his hard disk...

This is the scenario of a recent work in hyperfiction by John McDaid of the NY Institute of Technology. He very kindly sent us some of the files from Uncle Buddy's disk, creating various applications together with the following notes:

"Uncle Buddy's Phantom Funhouse" is a hyperbated fiction which attempts to create what Stuart Moulthrop has called "Object Oriented Text." Instead of telling "the" story through narrative, the Funhouse is an environment. The reader gets a letter from a law firm (See file "Lawyer's Letter") which tells them that a vanished science fiction writer has, for some reason, left them the contents of their hard disk. [Electronic sketchbooks, maps, word processing documents, photo albums, projects-in-progress] as well as some paper files and several cassette tapes with original music.

If it is up to the reader to decide what, if any connection they had with this "Uncle Buddy," and what, if any, story is "told" by the agglomeration of electronic documents.

Stand by for more coverage of John's work in future issues.



Go to the Barbers!

Our ACE correspondent met Cyberspace pioneer Jaron Lanier at the Los Angeles CyberArts Conference where the man in a datasuit with a virtual briefcase addressed the chosen few...

I was like stepping into the labyrinth hotel used in Kubrick's *The Shining*—except cyber lover was the only spirit roaming the halls. Before I'd even get through the door, I was confronted by six punks: aged between 16 and 20, who definitely looked on as if they were on a mission: destination Cyberspace. Somehow it all seemed as if a groovy San Francisco cyber street had been beamed down to this landmark hotel in the middle of vacated downtown LA. Very surreal.

After bicycling round the exhibits and occasionally grabbing onto a chair or other item to remind myself that I was *not* there, I summoned up the courage to approach a word and weary Jaron Lanier of VPL Research. Jaron is a very enigmatic individual—looking like a Postmodernist Hobbit as the way other writers have described him. Let's forget about his appearance, eh? The guy's simply 'who he is' and his uncooperative manner and sheer drive is wonderfully refreshing.

As things turned out, in true virtual fashion we ended up conducting the interview at the Los Angeles international airport, where I found Jaron playing a wooden flute while he waited for his passport and a boarding pass for a flight to a conference in Austria. Watching the masses all scrambling to their destinations, we wondered how many others were flying around depositing information and how soon we would be. In there so we could do all our commuting from a single virtual space.

ACE Jim Clark of Silicon Graphics Inc has been quoted by *The Wall Street Journal* as saying



VIRTUAL EGYPT
Pleak Dog Productions are a small multi-media group probably best known for their *Practical Factory* 3D software. New programmer Ken

Dowdle, keyboard player Ed Mandley, and bassist-man Andy Turner are turning their skills to creating computer environments. Our primary objective, says Ken, is to develop real electronic computer-based synthetic environments...The first of these could be their development of 'Virtual Egypt', dedicated to presenting a silicon sight-seeing tour of ancient history, but without any danger of the tourists chiselling bits of the Pyramids in the process. You can get a pilot window of their early explorations direct from the on-line contact Black Dog Productions Ltd, Thamesworth Studios, Rainville Road, London, W6 3HA. For further details



Jaron Lanier of VPL Research. OK, so the guy's got long hair. Now he's got back to business.

of you and your work that he's hunching around with a president—and *Time Magazine* has quoted a key element of one computer-graphics firm to the effect that 'he's promising something that will never be delivered. What's your response to this negative coverage?'

JL: Well, my belief after speaking to Jim Clark about it is that he was not speaking from a rational point of view—in fact his comment is peculiar for two reasons. First, the boys he is referring to are his own machines and second, I've made him a rather large amount of money in the last year. As far as the *Time Magazine* statement is concerned, I think that an anonymous critic is a non-sensy who is either an unimportant or so scared that their name will not be quoted. What can you say about such a person? I like informed criticism and think it's really important but this stuff is really just journalists making their own career.

ACE: Besides yourself and Eric Gulickson of Sense8 Autodesks etc, who are the major players in Virtual Reality?

JL: Right now there are hundreds of sites around the world, there's a very co-ordinated effort in Japan and many Japanese companies involved. Europe is slower but there are a number of European groups that are interesting (Watch this space). I'm not aware of any set-up that doesn't at least use our equipment partially and most of them use entirely our stuff, including the Japanese. We have Patrice showing a system based on and using our components. We also have a major project with Masaharuhi. The academic programs should also be noted. In the United States there's major academic programs at the University of North Carolina, MIT and the University of Washington, and minor programs in a number of schools including the University of California Berkeley. Personally, I would count the major players to be Ivan Sutherland, who is still alive and deserves a great deal of credit, Henry Purdie of the University of North Carolina, Tom Furness, formerly with the US Air Force, now I'm very happy to say in academia at the University of Washington, David Zeltzer of MIT Media Lab, and many others.

ACE: You've both reported as promising the development of some Virtual Reality Parlours. Do you know anyone that is actually starting these?

JL: Yes we are. We will have something fairly soon.

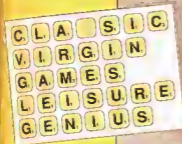
ACE: There is a rumor that an unnamed company is developing the equivalent of Silicon Graphics computers on cards that plug into the Mac.

JL: I know of about twenty companies who are attempting to do that and another twenty that I don't consider worth getting in touch with. It's no secret. However, the card level products being planned for Macs don't replace the same power of Silicon Graphics machines that we use. They would be able to simulate the lower level of those machines.

At this point, Jaron was siphoned off through the barometric immigration system. Our thanks to him for sparing us his voluble time.

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MONOPOLY	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
RISK	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
DIPLIMACY	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLUEDO	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
MASTER DETECTIVE	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLUEDO	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
MINDSTRETCHERS	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

COMING SOON

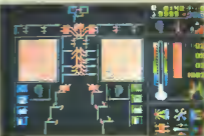
IT'S EASY
LOOK AT THE GAME OF SCRABBLE
AND MAKE UP THE HIGHEST SCORING WORD
FROM THE TILES IN THE RACK -
THE HIGHEST SCORING WORD WINS!!

- 1ST PRIZE - £500.00 WORTH OF SOFTWARE OF YOUR CHOICE
- 2ND PRIZE - £200.00 WORTH OF SOFTWARE OF YOUR CHOICE
- 3RD PRIZE - £100.00 WORTH OF SOFTWARE OF YOUR CHOICE
- 4TH PRIZE - £100.00 WORTH OF SOFTWARE OF YOUR CHOICE
- 5TH PRIZE - £100.00 WORTH OF SOFTWARE OF YOUR CHOICE

SEND YOUR ENTRIES
ALONG WITH YOUR NAME & ADDRESS TO:
SCRABBLE COMPETITION
VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC
16 PORTLAND ROAD, LONDON W11 4LA
COMPETITION CLOSING MARCH 31ST 1991



The Diner (Diner) - If the virus DIBS got here, you can always resort to surgery to remove infected parts. Not unfortunately, this does not hold true of the head - get a head-cold in this game and you're Christmas turkey.



The Diner (Diner) - a slithering (Diner?) scenario in which your best body is attacked by viruses. You have to master genetic engineering to keep your best alive.

GO TO THE ZOO

Electronic Zoo haven't been around for all that long, but like any respectable hunting house they've bagged a wide variety of game. The company was set up following boss Stuart Bell's departure from Microprose and has since established offices on both sides of the Atlantic.

Since then we've had the ACE-rated *Treasure Trap* - a pretty conventional but extremely playable isometric 3D game, the ambitious *Xiphos* (856, issue 37), and *Eco Phantoms* (see this month's screenfest, page 52). Having offices both sides of the pond gives the Zoo two territories to scout for product, so the public get to see a pretty wide variety of specimens.

Not that this company have had it easy, it has to be said. Starting a software house in the current climate is hard work and, behind the scenes, Zoo haven't found it easy to locate top-selling games. One problem is the continuing weakness of the ST and the Amiga in the States, so - as US boss Dick Todd told us on a recent visit - most of the active programming talent for those machines is still to be found in Europe.

However, Zoo are already putting together a large collection of goodies for release later this year and, although the animals won't exactly be coming out two by two, this sneak preview is proof that there's enough out there to keep the cages occupied.

It's a jungle out there for software houses bent on bagging programming talent.

Here's a sneak peek at some of Electronic Zoo's forthcoming trophies - the cage doors will be opened later in 1991

BEAST BUSTER!

Zoo are hard at work on *Son of Zeus* - a mega-squirt combat scenario that they reckon will give Polygnostia's *Beast* series a run for its money. The game takes place in ancient Greece and has your hero wobbling all manner of mythical foes. Check out these pics for taste of the final experience...



SON OF ZEUS

Shades of Shabali in Land of the Wags, ah?



BEAST BUSTERS

Nice game!



CYCLOPS

Cyclops - smashing this beast isn't easy!

1UP 12093

BORUS TIME BAR



Dick Todd and Debbie Matic hold the keys to the city in the US. Zoo America is located in Baltimore, not far from the US Capitol. Zoo America is a highly original puzzle game, still in the early stages of development but already very playable. Reeling spikes converge on a central point and are connected by invisible circles forming a grid similar to a spider's web. The road unweaves a colored ball from the perimeter to the center where balls of different colors constantly appear and disappear. To gain points you must make your ball with one of the same color to the center. The strategy relies because of the river, stationary balls that are locked to the grid and block your path. You must release the grid and locked balls to open up new paths towards the center - easy at the lower levels but very difficult at the higher ones where, as here, there are numerous locked balls.

The ball marks it in a brown ball that you can collide with for one of several powers-ups, including mine time. The letter is indicated by the bar on the reference left. You have to collect a certain number of balls of each color and your scores rely in shown by the colored bars at bottom left. The black ball makes things harder by following you around and sucking you if you come whenever it hits you.



Krafty set-up

Zoo has made use of the US connections to secure the US distribution for Blast Trackball and projects besides. This trackball is available in PC, Mac, Amiga, and 32 systems - contact Zoo on 0202 541541



Stuart King and Paul Rowley pose on a busy day outside their luxury office location near Grosvenor Gardens from left: Patricia Clarke, Jonathan Kemp, Austin Scott-Daly, Paul Rowley, and maestro ball

DARK SPYRE

Dark Spyre is a traditional RPG-influenced adventure, though without the ability to form a party. The game features a clever - but rather fiddly - on-screen interface that makes good use of icon and pointer controls. Unusual attributes include the ability to make your character right or left handed (important because you actually put weapons and objects in your character's hands), an "accuracy" attribute for throwing objects, and six different types of spell (ranging from enchantment for protection to divination for information). Unusually for an RPG, there's also an editor program available separately to design your own levels.



Rolling started on Level 1



Each level features a different graphics style. And the monsters, of course, get tougher and tougher...



The **Spyre Within** - deep within the body, you're busy setting up on-body defenses to combat the vital essence

KICK OFF 2



A NEW DE SOCCER S

- BLISTERING PACE
- PIXEL PERFECT PASSING
- SUPERB TACTICAL GAMEPLAY

KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the gameplay of KICK OFF, winner of the THE GAME OF THE YEAR in the U.K., and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled players the world over.

- Full size multi-directional scrolling pitch with the players, markings etc. in correct proportion.
- 1 to 4 players option. (Amiga and ST only)
- 2 players TEAM option against the computer or 2 other players. Hundreds of players each with a unique combination of attributes (stamina, pace, etc.) and skills (passing, shooting, tackling, etc.)
- Instinctive Kick Off joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot, head or chip the ball and do sliding tackles.
- Set piece. FREE KICKS including dummies and the ability to tip the ball or bend the ball round a defensive wall.
- 9 types of corner kicks with full control of shot power. Long and short throw ins.
- Team selection from a squad of 16 with substitution and a choice of tactics.
- League and cup competitions with Extra Time, Injury Time and sudden death penalty shoot outs.
- Facility to view, edit and save the Action Replays and create a Golden Shots disc. (Excl. IBM & CBM 64)
- Facility to load Player Manager teams and tactics for a single or league game.
- Red and yellow cards, 16 different referees, injury time and a host of features to create an atmosphere for a game which is real fun to play.

ST ACTION - The best game ever to grace the ST Highest accolade I can give.

AMIGA USER INT - The best computer game ever 97%

THE ONE - Ultimate soccer simulation 96%

THE ACE - Brilliant. Buy, Buy, Buy 93%

AMIGA FORMAT - Best footy game to have appeared on any machine. 94%

ST FORMAT - What a gem! Gem to play Magic 90%

C & VG - Championship winning material 95%

GAMES MACHINE - Probably the best sports game ever 92%

COMMODORE USER - No other footie game can touch it 90%

AMIGA ACTION - Surpasses all other football games. 93%

POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - Nothing short of brilliant.

NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - Computer football event of the year

AMIGA & ST £19.99 EXP. AMIGA £24.99
IBM (AT & XT Turbo, EGA & VGA) £24.99
CBM 64 - SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD £9.99, £14.99

An International class player takes charge of a third division club as Player Manager. His brief is simple - Bring Back The Glory Days.

His success depends on his playing skills on the pitch and managerial skills in devising winning tactics, acquiring the right players from the transfer market and building a team worthy of the highest honours.

- Unique facility to design and implement your own tactics.
- Over 1000 individual players, each with a unique combination of attributes and skills.
- A lively transfer market. Haggle for the best deal.
- 4 division league and a cup tournament with sudden death penalty shoot out.

The Player Manager brings the every day realities of a manager's life, his talents as a manager and a player, his triumphs and his failures into a sharp FOCUS.

ST ACTION - A stroke of pure genius.

THE ONE - An exceptional football management simulation, astounding depth. Most involved, rewarding and playable.

THE ACE - Successfully blends challenging soccer management with frantic end to end arcade action. 82%

NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - The sheer depth is incredible. A definitive management game.

COMMODORE USER - At last a management game that requires

true management skills. A winner 94%

ST FORMAT - Brilliant 93%

AMIGA FORMAT - Enthralling and addictive 85%

ZZAP - Best football management game ever written. 92%

AMIGA - ST £19.99



DIENSION IN R SIMULATIONS

THE FINAL WHISTLE Amiga - ST £12.99 (Rel Nov.)

Raises the skills required and gameplay of KICK OFF 2 to new heights.

Two extra kits

Look at any player stats. (attributes and skill) before selecting squad.

Totally new corner kicks with full control of the power, height and trajectory of the ball.

Enhanced throw ins and penalty shots.

Provision to flick the ball in the air and do a blinding header or a spectacular overhead kick.

New two players team mode. Player 1 in position or nearest to the ball and player 2 in position or keeper.

Linesmen and referee on the pitch.

A new player attribute FLAIR. A player with a high level of flair will try a solo attempt at the goal.

4 new pitches - Wembley - Icy - Muddy - Non-League

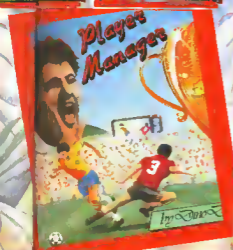
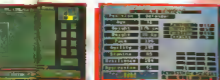
And Lot's More

WINNING TACTICS (£6.99 - Rel Nov.) - A collection of tactics for use in Player Manager or KO2 with full explanations.

RETURN TO EUROPE (£9.99 - Rel Dec.) - Three European cup competitions. UEFA cup - European Cup - Cup Winners Cup.

GIANTS OF EUROPE (Rel. 1991) Best teams of Europe on one disc.

br. 94%



Draw specifications. Subject to changes without notice

ANCO SOFTWARE, UNIT 10, BURNHAM TRADING ESTATE, LAWSON ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT.
TELEPHONE No. 0322 92513/18 FAX No. 0322 93422

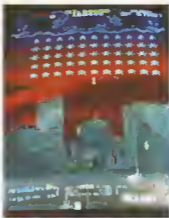


Sega, Konami, Taito... all the big names were at the AMOA Show, but it was hard going. Everything other than sequels is his of yesteryear.

Hard Goin'

Welcome to New Orleans and the biggest arcade games get-together in the States.

While the delegates' spouses were taken on tours of croc-infested swamps, the sharks cruised the Show – and ACE correspondent John Cook was one of them...



Autocross (left) is a bit boring (left) versus Race Drivin' and Super Stunt (right) versus... er... what WAS it called?

Every year the arcade owners of the USA get together, slap each other on the back for umm, well, being American mosby, drink large amounts of the fizzy gnats' wee they call beer and lounge around in swanky hotels in exotic locations. That's Arcade Manufacturers Of America (AMOA) for you.

AMOA was certainly in need of peripheral galz this year, because the games were having a hard time providing it. The world economy, so they say, is going into Recession. News readers are looking deeply depressed, the goat initials are a bit green and the coin-op manufacturers are going back to ideas almost ten years old.

Yes, the mood was decidedly downbeat, as originality and technical innovation was deemed to be out and sequels and re-hashes were in. Faced with the growing challenge of home consoles and a downbeat dollar the industry moguls have, by and large, junked creativity and imagination and well and truly battered down those sequel hatches.

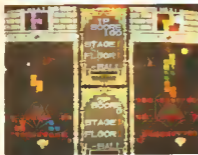
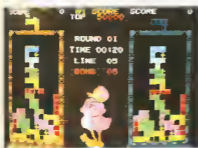
Let's start at the beginning, shall we? Alan Games' lukawarm on the heels of its big hit last year, took this opportunity to launch 'Race Drivin'. Would that have any similarity to 'Hard Drivin'? Certainly would – in fact the original track has been left in the box for you to re-live those golden moments of '89. Still, added has been a selection of cars to race, plus two new tracks, 'Autocross' and 'Super Stunt'.

'Autocross' is a bit boring and requires bags of opposite lock. 'Super Stunt' is fairly awesome, in difficulty with the real humdinger being a coxcrew section of road. 'Challenging' yes. New, no. 'Poking around in the original core code and bolting on some more silicon seems to have

Final Lap? Does it give you a false idea of what you will be doing early on in the game?



Ataxx is a spectacularly addictive title which manages to give extra tactical twists to a classic and combines this with satisfying on-screen presentation. Unfinitely a strong contender for successful computer conversion.



Several Menace and Puzzle are yet more games created by Tetris.

increased the speed of the thing by about 15-20%, but in essence, Race Driver can simply be considered as extra tracks for the original.

This will be fun, for those of us that have already mastered the predecessor, but is unlikely to prove a lasting challenge over and above that.

On to Namco - past innovators par excellence. What have we had? Final Lap if

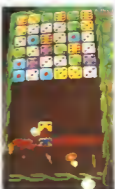


PICK OF THE SHOW

What do you get when you cross Block Hole with Poker Dice? An astonishingly wonderful game called Palamedes, that's what. Lines of dice step down the screen, while you fire dice up the screen, selecting the number you fire by cycling through 1-6.

Fire a die up the screen, and if it hits a like number, that die disappears. Keep adding the lines of dice until descending twice and faster you get overwhelmed and stomped on. Big deal! What makes this game, however, is that when you stop a die, it's transferred to a display below the main playfield. This display holds five dice and the idea is that you try to make poker dice hands - a full house, a straight, etc. out of the stopped dice.

If you do this, depending on the hand you make, up to four of the descending lines magically disappear and you carry on in that fashion until you get overwhelmed and stomped on. If, by the way, you did expect it to appear on a home computer near you, jolly soon.



Palamedes, pick of the ARCADE show. It's a masterpiece of simple mechanics.

If it doesn't take a genius to work out where this one has its roots, does it? These extra tracks, plus the original - one leader, one about the same and one easier. Now, I loved Final Lap and like Race Driver more of the same can be welcome. For about 30 minutes. But it ain't going to get the punters drooling on the carpet. Neither is Dragon Sabre, the sequel to Dragon Spirit that brings a new meaning to the word identical.

Capcom's offerings were similarly lacklustre. Super Pang - that is, Pang, Garner Arwing - horizontal sci-fi spirit things that plays better than its cousin but is, in effect, UN Squadron II.

Taito's main thrust was a competent, but sterile mowem down, Space Gun - joined in that sad genre by Ghost Hunters from Sega and Steel Ginnee from Namco. Tucked away on the stand, however, were more state-of-the-art sedatives going under the name of Majestic Twelve. Actually, it's Space Invaders. Did I hit a time warp or what? I pinch myself and check out the delegates for hot pants, platform shoes and flared trousers. No, this really is 1930.

Not so you'd notice over at Namstar - who were displaying a Breakout variant called Thunder and Lightning. Totally rad, deft and hip, dude. Excuse me while I break dance, Vicar. And over at the Fabtec booth - is that Cabal II I see below me, based in the Wild West and called Blood Brothers? And...Ooh, look! Double Dragon III! No doubt to be closely followed up by Double Dragon IV, subtitled - No more Mr Nice Guy, Urban Fith.

Of course, there were some gems of wonderfulness among the detritus. Casco Heat confirms Jaleco as major league bunnies, being the best driving game for many a year - technically exciting and vastly

playable. Palamedes, a PCB puzzle game shows that the small guys can still deliver the goods from time to time. Ataxx, an Othello variant from Leyland, showed that at least one of the bigger companies is prepared to take a lie on an oddball idea, from time to time.

But largely, the dire standard of releases this year, in terms of originality may well backfire on the coin-op industry as a whole, turning its doom and gloom predictions into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Which is bad news for the punters that are prepared to pay for Advanced Computer Entertainment in the arcades and will settle for nothing less. Errr - doesn't that look a bit like...Evee since Tetris came out in the arcades and was a mega pangalactic hit, all the manufacturers have been scurrying around trying to emulate that success in this newly found arcade/puzzle genre.

Some were good - Block Hole for instance, some were crap, Puzzle being the most vile in my opinion. Whatever, none have come close to the doing the numbers of the Russian wonder. So if you can't beat 'em...

That's the logic behind a couple of releases this Winter, anyway. On the Neo-Geo, you have Puzzle. Well, I certainly was - largely by trying to discern the differences between the one and Tetris. Then there's a PCB called Mosaic - which has a nice twist to the Tetris format, by allowing you to alter the length/width of certain shapes as they fall down the screen.

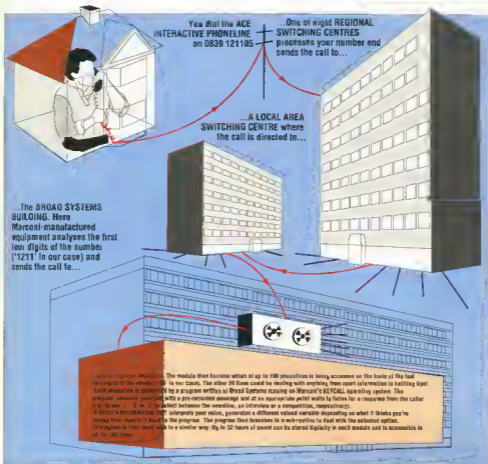
Far be it from anyone to suggest that these games are anything other than legitimate variants of an established game genre - but don't be surprised if certain copyright holders start to get very stumpy indeed.

SPECTRUM
CASE & DISK
AMSTRAD
CARTRIDGE
COMMODORE
CARTRIDGE
ATARI ST
AMIGA

ocean

**NO TIME FOR
BALLOONIN' AROUND**
NO TIME TO SHOOT THE BREEZE

In fact you've hardly set your feet down in the mighty U.S.S.R. and it's all action. You light up your latest and most formidable bubble poppin' piece...but now that bouny bomb has just multiplied!!! Tour the world in the most addictive arcade game of the year from Mitchell Corp. A quick eye and super fast reflexes will give you just half-chance of a win... the other half will come the bounce goes your way.



When I'm calling you...

ACE explains the technology behind its INTERACTIVE PHONELINE!



OOOPS!

Apologies to all who tried to call the ACE Interactive Phoneline early last month and got a short line. It's not always a difficult task and problems outside our control meant the lack of hot to be postponed for a couple of days. Everything should be running smoothly now. Consider our words well read truly shipped.

Ever talked to a computer? I don't mean typing in phrases to a parser. We're in an adventure game, I mean actually spoken to one? If you've ever called the ACE Interactive Phoneline you have, although you probably didn't realise it. Oh, the voice on the other end of the line sounds human, but it's just a front - they're very cunning, these computers! But

hang on, you say, at certain points I speak to it and it acts according to my instructions. How can a computer do that? Read on, and all will be revealed...

The route your call takes is probably best explained by reference to the diagram opposite. When you dial the Phoneline Number, a series of SWITCHING CENTRES direct your call to BROAD SYSTEMS, a com-

pany who specialise in interactive phone lines and take care of all the technological jiggery-pokery for ACE.

At Broad Systems the call is routed to a program that plays recorded scripts written by the ever-fading ACE staff (??). Occasionally the program requires that the caller makes a choice (i.e. from a menu). Some systems accomplish this by asking the caller to press a button on the phone's keypad. On more advanced systems lets the caller simply speak his or her choice (within a limited word range). The program then switches to various sub-routines depending on the selection, which in turn leads to other recorded messages and maybe further options and sub-routines.

Obviously this all gets pretty complex from the programmer's and engineer's point of view. However, all this effort and technology is being directed to one end - to make the ACE Interactive PhoneLine as easy, fun and enjoyable to use as possible. Why not give it a try? Now ACE is never more than a phone call away.

SAY THAT AGAIN?

The theory behind the Marconi speech recognition unit used in our phoneLine is fairly simple. The caller's voice is broken down into a frequency profile. The unit then compares this to a stored database of profiles for the various words it 'understands'. The closest match is then reported back and the program proceeds accordingly.

The obvious limitations on the size of the profile database mean it can be used in two ways. It can be trained to recognise a large number of words for an individual's unique voice (i.e. you - but nobody else - could program your computer by speaking to it) or recognise a smaller number of words from a broad range of voice types, using the sampled voices of several thousand people from all over the UK.

Our phoneLine obviously uses the second form of database. It can recognise all the numbers from '0' to '9' and 'YES', 'NO', 'STOP', 'HELP' and 'CANCEL'. In addition there is a 'grunt' mode, where the system waits for any response from the caller and then continues. Because the database is stored on EPROM it can be easily adapted to other words. For example, the Robocop 2 game understands special words such as 'POINTS' and 'INVENTORY'.

Although the theory is simple, the technology certainly isn't, and there are still some minor

limitations to the system. It can't understand a heavily accented voice, for example, and the lack of clarity in older phone systems can also cause difficulties. However, most should have no trouble at all.

TOTAL KEYCALL

The programs that operate the phoneLines run on Marconi's operating system, KEYCALL, which was specifically designed for the management of interactive phoneLines. Each program is written by the staff at Broad Systems using the KEYMANAGER editor. For example, suppose you wanted to ask a multiple-choice question, with three possible answers, '1', '2' and '3', the correct answer being numbered '1'. The code would look something like this (the text in italics explains each line):

```
01 - Library      ang3      Mike variables
A=1 (the correct choice) using a standard library routine.
02 - Voice quiz  Play message asking the question
03 - Library     ins       Call up library routine then uses the speech recognition unit to test the caller's reply and thus assign a value to variable % The routine defaults to an incorrect answer if the caller takes more than 30 seconds to reply.
04 - Library     sub       Test if A=9 (i.e. is the answer right?) using a standard library routine. If no, then go to the next line of code. If yes, jump to the line after next
05 - Branch      wrong   Jump to a sub-routine for dealing with wrong answers.
06 - Branch      right  Jump to a sub-routine dealing with right answers.
```

The more complex programs, particularly multiple-choice games like Robocop 2, could require that the programmer take account of several hundred decision branches, many of which will loop back into each other, so you'll appreciate that they can get pretty difficult to debug!



"Where's the nearest phonebox, creep?" PPC offers you the chance of becoming the tin can in this new interactive adventure game.

YOUR CALL, CREEPY

Your patrol car's radio crackles into life "Robocop 2!! In progress at the garage on 4th and Delaware" A prime directive flashes on your view to remind you of your duty Uphold the Law. Tires squeal as you spin the car around and head towards the scene of the armed robbery.

As you approach you hear shouts and the sound of gunfire. You stop the car. What now? Drive in and try to gain surprise? Or attempt to sneak in on foot? But perhaps it would be better to fire a warning shot the creep a chance to surrender, then approach on foot? You get out of the car, fire a round into the air and move in.

Unfortunately that shot has given the perp enough warning to set up a lethal ambush.

Fig. That's right, thanks to the wonder of interactive phonelines technology you can become Detroit's deadliest law enforcer. The game's plot, based on the recent Robocop 2 film, has you seeking out and eliminating the evil drug baron peddling 'Waku', the most addictive substance ever known, to the

down-trodden populace of Old Detroit.

Basically the game takes the form of a multiple-choice adventure. The caller hears a plot situation, each pre-recorded by actors with sound effects dubbed in. Then you are presented with several options on how to react. The plot proceeds in different directions depending on which you choose. You can pick up objects found along the way and use them in situations where you think they might be helpful. To help spread out the phone bills there's a SAVE option where you are given a special code number that lets you continue where you left off next time you ring.

The game was written by The Phone Program Company, a new outfit set up by established game musician Gwinn Graphics to develop the possibilities of this new entertainment media. PPC believes the combination of interactive story, vivid sound effects and your imagination make this a totally new and exciting experience. Look out for the adverts!

YOU'VE READ ABOUT IT, NOW TRY IT!

The ACE Interactive PhoneLine is on the air right now. Last month we offered you the opportunity to listen to the programmer of S.A. Talking about his ACE-rated game, plus the chance to win yourself a copy of this amazing graphic adventure. This month there's a mega-competition to win yourself a game from the Top 20, which will come online on at 12.00 p.m. Wednesday, January 28th.

But that's not all. We at ACE know how frustrating it can be seeing a game on the shelves that looks good but not knowing whether it is or not because the reviews haven't come out yet! So this month sees the start of the ACE Reviewline, where a selection of the very latest games will be given the definitive ACE once-over. The selection will be updated every Wednesday at 12.00 p.m., starting on January 9th. Essential listening for the discerning buyer!

And of course there's the ACE Newsline, where you can find out all the latest sales-crowd gossip and hot news from the crazy world of computer entertainment! Again, it's updated every Wednesday.

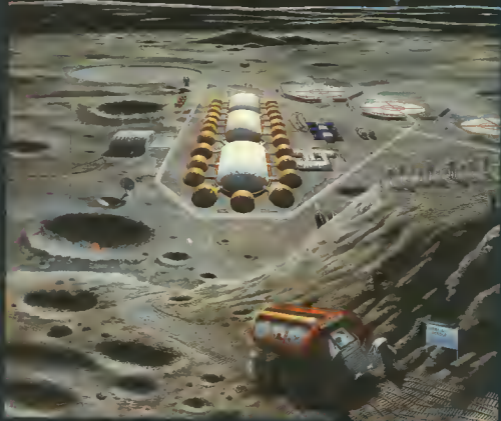
0839 121105

Don't forget that number - it's the only one you need!

MOONBASE

Lunar Colony Simulator

"...coming in fast and low from the northeastern edge of Imbrium, the lander brushed the top of the debris shield on Pad 3 West as the pilot struggled to gain minimal TDA (touchdown altitude). Priority 2 codes allowed the crew a certain amount of added speed and flexibility, but the fine line had been crossed, the room for error gone."



**Gripping
stuff!**

Wesson International
© copyright 1990



MINDSCAPE

For your local dealer, contact: Mindscape International Ltd, The Coach House, Hooklands Estate, Scaynes Hill, West Sussex RH17 7NG. Tel: 0444 831 761

For further information on Mindscape products and new releases, please call: 0898 234 214. Calls charged at 33p per minute off-peak and 44p per minute at peak times.

IBM PC & 100% compatibles. 640K RAM required. Hercules, CGA, EGA, VGA graphics supported. Twin floppy drives or hard disk required. Microsoft mouse optional. Amiga version available January 1991.

MIDWINTER II

FLAMES OF FREEDOM

The Flames have been lit - A new age dawns.

Midwinter II. Flames of Freedom will be available for your Atari ST, Commodore Amiga and IBM PC compatibles in the Spring of 1991



MASTERS OF STRATEGY

MicroProse. Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos. GL8 8LD

SCREEN TEST



Line of fire: See player machine gun action from US 60's - probably the best driving conversion for events. See page 60



Quarter! A accessible solid 3D settings for the action-packed gameplay on page 55

ACE RATED!

Question: Is this game really going to grab me? And for how long?
Answer: the PIC curve - the heart of the ACE Rating System.

The PIC - Predicted Interest Curve - is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around

We on ACE know you don't just play a game - you experience it. The Predicted Interest Curve is the only review system that takes this all-important factor into account.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

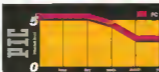
For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours - who probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute anyway.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here,

followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may

put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month end year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.



The predicted and presentation are excellent. But after a few releases the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's dismissed from these lists...

AGE RATING	VERSION DETAILS
900	
	<p>Early version tested prior to our ratings for graphics. 3D level details have been added, levels, levels, and fun. Both. The Fun Factor goes up the more you play, a great bonus to add to your list. A few bugs, and a minor but useful feature to play. (Replay) rating number based on historical and feedback from our readers. Need to study.</p>

We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards lots of approval for outstanding software performance - if a game really breaks the boundaries of sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire - in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses you have been warned!

- Awarded to games of outstanding quality - but due to be replaced next month with the new ACE Trailblazer award (see p15)**
- Originally awarded for a just these days, and any game that has it deserves a special mention. This ACE award is reserved usually for these rare**
- One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that - the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.**
- Second is the "forgetting" of games - but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to - Based on use of audio in game.**

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Megadrive **John Madden's American Football**, Super Famicom **Mario 4** and **Days of Thunder** on NES. Yo-yo, spinners...

ON CD page 72/73

Go to blazes, bro - in Gremlin's stunning **Little Devils**

• The very best multi-level parallel scrolling

• Excellent sound effects in the demo list & testing room

• Gameplay in the 3D maze Babylon section

• Limited use of objects

• Over-frequent disk access

• Colour combination in the level room scene

SEQUEL POWER!

First came the licences. Then came the sequels. Now we have Licenced Sequels. Just how far down the road of follow-ups and tie-ins can Ocean go?

There's plenty of high speed excitement to impress you for a little while, but although you may find the steady update a bit slow, the reinforcement of the bad guys, mobile video and motorbikes will keep you on your toes for some time.

AGE RATING	AMIGA
840	Slightly less suitable for the first years. Chase 2 offers more excitement, more fun and a game that's a bit more appealing to play. The most a child can get out of it is the graphics and sound effects. The game is somewhat more fun than the last game and the following ones of Robo, only just justified.

AGE RATING	ATARI ST
840	The ST edition is actually identical to the Amiga, except that it's slightly slower, and more difficult. The sound and sound effects are the same. It's a little more complex than the Amiga, having better, but both differences are rather subtle, and tend to be lost in the overall feel of the game.

RELEASE DETAILS		
AMIGA	£34.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£10.99	OUT NOW



On the road with the Special Criminal Investigation boys. The traffic these days is a bit heavy.



ROBO POWER! Multiple badies roam the screen and explode when hit by Robo's bullets. Things look pretty good here.

Robocop 2, the movie, packed neither the Robo-Power nor Robo-Action the trailers so gleefully promised. Aside from the excellent special effects of Robocop 2, the robot, it was a largely uninspired affair.

Robocop 2, the computer game, suffers from the same problem. It's well programmed and full of all the requisite elements for a fun-filled game, but is utterly devoid of originality. Nevertheless, Robocop 2 does deliver an extremely high body count and a very tough challenge.

Robo's mission is to track down the evil Cain and put an end to his distribution of the deadly narcotic Nuke. Eventually, Cain gets batted into a big robot who in turn must be tracked down and destroyed.

Three game-styles are incorporated. The main is the side-on scrolling blast. Robocop must

wipe out the bad guys, locating and confiscating canisters of Nuke, while rescuing innocent bystanders on the way. In the ST version the innocents are scientists. In the Amiga version, they look like truck drivers.

The level of action throughout the game is impressive. The number of bad guys to be taken out and the quality of their animations cannot fail to impress. It's a shame that on the ST version you can shoot through the bad guys' legs and they won't even flinch.

Shooting open Coke dispensers and collecting the Coke inside tops up Robo's energy. It's essential to keep guzzling the Coke, as Robo's energy gets sapped at an alarming rate by enemy bullets and laser beams. In between each stage is a firing range and a don't-go-back-on-your-own-footsteps puzzle yielding an extra life if successfully completed.

Robocop 2 is a genuinely tough challenge. And



The heavy force of us in the Amiga version is difficult to avoid plunging headlong into the vat of Nuke...

CHASE HQ 2

Chase HQ offered a thrilling mix of racing and crook-busting action. The sequel offers, well, the same again.

Evil villains have kidnapped the Mayor's daughter and are racing to their hideout. The Special Criminal Investigation unit has been drafted in to apprehend the villains and rescue the hijacked chick.

Information is fed to you through Nancy at Chase HQ. She'll detail the type of vehicle the current crook is driving, and also brief you on special hazards/assistance on the next stage.

Racing through the levels in your shiny red motor, you are pestered and harassed by Sunday drivers, petrol-bomb-throwing motorcyclists and the henchmen of arch badde Bob.

Your aim is to race through each level in the quickest possible time and apprehend the driver of each suspect vehicle.

Apprehending the bad guys, of course, is easier said than done. Rather than simply barging into them, you must blast them into submission with rockets, handguns and shotguns. A damage indicator on the left of the screen displays how close to conking out the target vehicle actually is.



Congratulations! Gravelly-slighted speech issues from the speaker as your first nick takes about Mr Big. (7)

ROBOCOP 2

Ocean reigned the charts for more than a year with the first Robocop game. Can they pull it off again?

despite the fact that you have to start from the beginning of your current level each time Robo cops out, it's pretty addictive.

But as you play through the game, you may not find yourself thinking: Isn't the opening scene at the River Rouge complex somehow reminiscent of the warehouse level in Uncharted, or the Aris Chemical plant in Batman? Aren't the deadly droplets of fermenting beer in the brewery exactly the same as the deadly droplets of acid in - again - Batman? Aren't the guys on motorcycles strangely similar to the guys on motorcycles in Sly Spy?

In short, should it really be so easy to imagine Robocop being replaced by Batman, Sly Spy, Arnie, Diet Ness or indeed any of Ocean's recent movie heroes?

Jim Douglas



Approaching the end of the game, Cain, in RoboCop 2's busy hordes down a skyscraper on top of Bates.



ATARI ST: Watch out for long falls, as the ST falls can't stand them.

The volume of action offers quite a high hit level to begin with. After a couple of hours, though, you may well be frustrated by the difficulty. Still, it isn't for a day and there's always fun to be had. Conversely, when the thirty programs tough will keep coming later, for more, the RoboCop 2 is a hard nut to crack.

AGE RANGE	AMIGA	
800	Large graphics and plenty good instructions. Clear cut user interface. A very impressive. Unlike the ST version, the game does have some padding some cut lines, and the graphics, using fall don't seem to change. Price too high.	
AGE RANGE	ATARI ST	
800	RoboCop's adventures in a world. Although in the characters are similar, but in the Amiga version, they were more realistic. In this version, RoboCop looked like already someone and that makes him look to punch down some. More interesting than in past or going the right way, then the long a fall will it's fall.	
RELEASE DETAILS		
AMIGA	£26.95	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW

All releases by Publisher in January



Nancy at Chase HQ describes the van in which the next criminal can be found. Some hefty air swapping involved here.

Once you've plugged the baddies' car/van/truck a couple of times, the SCI helicopter will emerge overhead and parachute down a rocket-launcher. By diving underneath the dropper, you can collect the rocket launcher and use the six rockets to bring your foe to a more rapid fall.

Inevitably once each crook has been arrested, he will profess his innocence of the kidnapping and squeal on a bigger crime boss. Nancy back at HQ will then point you in the right direction to apprehend the next speeding crook.

SCI comes on two disks, and there's a fair amount of swapping to be done inbetween stages, but the music keeps on playing, and the momentum isn't broken down too badly.

The action is fast, but the game in the first round is a bit easy. With only a couple of decent attempts, you can get pretty much all the way through.

If you like your games reasonably simple, but with lots of blasting and plenty of shouting at the screen, SCI could keep you happy for some time.

Jim Douglas



Fortunately, the tunnel proves to be class and your partner can deal his deadly 'kiddie laser'. You've got plenty of Turbo Boost left, so get cracking.



Your prey has plunged through the waterfall, and you must bravely follow. Better hope the tunnel is clear...



Awesome's Progressor is at your disposal when confronted by the ugly.

AWESOME

Pygnosis go beyond the final frontier

The plot of *Awesome* has you and the crew of the *Elapidae* arriving for a spot of trading in the Oclaran system, only to find it's scheduled for obliteration by the Honakahn and their dreaded Promethean cannon. In true game-play tradition, this apparently serves as a convenient excuse to destroy anything in your path while making your escape.

This isn't as easy as it sounds, because fuel is both a rare and expensive commodity. It can only be obtained by fulfilling contracts, missions and, should the opportunity arise, raiding convoys.

Most sections of the game are seen from directly above and use a rotational scrolling technique akin to *Rotoz* but far smoother and in an almost infinite number of directions. The controls take a while to get used to and at times the action becomes just a bit too hectic, this is mainly due to the large size of your ship and could have been rectified if all the screen had been used.

Arrival at any planetary destination changes the view to a 3-D perspective. Here you must eliminate a Space Serpent before getting to a landing site. This part moves extremely fast and looks good but is rather hard to play.

Once past the serpent, you have a time limit in which you must find the landing pad. This, along with the next section, reverts to the original

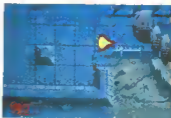
overhead view and is important because the number of mines you destroy here affect the oxygen supply you have when finally searching for the entrance.

Inside you have the option to buy weapons (which range from Sonic Mining Lasers to Wide-Beam Plasma Cannons) and sell any cargo you have acquired, demand varies so you should look for a good deal.

Once done, you can access a Navcom Terminal, whereupon you are presented with a view of the solar system. Here you must decide whether to leave now (and save money on hotel bills) or wait until the orbits bring your target planet closer, a little brain power is required here as without careful planning you could find yourself stuck on a planet with no way to get off.

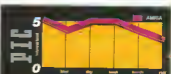
With eight planets each with its own theme, *Aquosa* (water), *Morb* (dead), *Volcum* (lava) etc., the game provides a long term challenge. The graphics really do impress, with a wide variety of colourful, well shaded sprites which, along with the smooth scrolling, make the game visually very attractive. The sound, on the other hand, is a little weak in comparison and although there are some good tunes they're not as good as *Beast 1*. There aren't enough spot effects either. Minor niggles aside, *Awesome* proves to be one of Pygnosis's strongest games yet, but at £35 a go it's not cheap, though the company are still pushing their new definition of the word 'free' with the bundled T shirt.

● Khalid Howlader



Planet

Big bad and beautiful action in the new Pygnosis tradition



The sleek lines and great graphics instantly impress but these pale before the surface detail, getting credit for the overall effect. It then stands as the whole variety of features enhance the atmosphere and to the extent as you designed further disturbing some, previously unseen, scenes, both on screen levels.

AMIGA

With high-resolution graphics and the smooth, beautiful scrolling it really impresses. On a 5.0 megabyte system you'll instantly look out of place in your local arcade. You'll feel surprised by your own resources, and if you thought that it was good, *Awesome* will take your breath away in your choice of a lot of state-of-the-art action, and a primary approach worth a full try.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA £34.95 OUT NOW

No other version planned

With the excellent *Elite Plus* ready for release, Microprose launch another polygon-driven space exploration game. Why?

As a result of rampant over-consumerism and careless global littering, Earth has been turned into an uninhabitable wasteland and mankind like some billion-strong bunch of bums, must find a new home in space. Your mission as captain of a *Trialblazer* probe is to chug around the galaxy locating suitable worlds on which the massive *Coghestops* ships can deposit their cargo of humans.

Needless to say, finding a suitable planet is far from easy. Before you get the slightest whiff of a suitable organic-based oxygenated world with a decent temperature, there's a lot of business to take care of - for while humans require a precise set of conditions in which to survive, there are alien races capable of living virtually anywhere. As a result, there's no shortage of bug-eyed creatures with funny names to encounter.

You begin the game in the *Trialblazer* in a roadscript part of the universe. The *Navigation Starmap* shows your current location in your star cluster. Clicking the fire button will cycle the *Starmap's* orbit direction device through each set of worlds in turn offering information on each.

Having selected a world within range, you can *Spindrive* your way there (see panel and, assuming you don't encounter anything hostile en route, you'll pop out at your destination after only a couple of seconds).

It's likely that when you emerge from *Spindrive*, an alien craft will be present. By launching a probe, communications can be opened with the aliens via a translator on the lower half of the screen.

Different alien races have varying dispositions from the sneaky *Broommasters* who endeavor to ensnare your help in lighthing their enemies to the highly developed *Fel*, who are cooperative and unkeen to enter into combat. Your alliances with alien races are extremely important to the greater success of your mission.



None too earthy space combat tends to distract from the rather interesting and depth space trading.



LIGHTSPEED

Should a world be uninhabitable, it may be worth despatching one of your three mining colonies and claiming the planet's resources for trade or to help support a fledgling world elsewhere.

Aside from the trading and exploration side which actually work quite well, *Lightspeed* offers 3D polygonal combat and short-range flight sections which, frankly, are pretty dull. Alien ships fly around the *Trialblazer* firing away and you can

either blast them with your main gun or launch a more maneuverable lighter ship to fight back. While the coding is perfectly competent, this particular side of the scenario adds nothing to the game - there are far superior 3D space-flight games available (*Elite Plus*, for example) and this particular bit of added interest lacks, well, interest.

Lightspeed, I venture to suggest, would have been far more enjoyable as an all-out trading/exploration/strategy game, completely doing away with the unspecial 3D sections and devoting more attention to the potential of the trading elements and world development.

● Jim Douglas

PC

AMIGA

PRICE 750

AMIGA

Each on a fast PC with the minimum level of setup required, LightSpeed's 3D falls to ground. The graphics for both the environment and the trading sections, however, are excellent, with continuous feeding some routes for the unhardy alien creature.

RELEASE DETAILS

PC £24.99 OUT NOW

No other versions planned

FLUFFY DICE

Your *Trialblazer* ship is initially reasonably equipped but a long way short of perfect. A visit to the *Engine Room* will reveal that there are a lot of gaps for extra components and those resident are the most basic models.

Alien nations will often have reached a more advanced level of technology than Earth. As a result, you can buy (for a price) enhanced components from your ship. Better gun components will increase the fire rate and damage potential of your shots. Enhanced turbines will increase thrust capabilities etc. You can also trade the less vital pieces of machinery for fuel if you get really desperate.

BOTICS



The simplest court type. Just pass your opponent and a ball.

Bat 'n' ball fun with a robotic twist from KRISALIS

It is a time of media moguls. The Satellite TV Companies dominate, and by 2085 they beam 952 channels into every home. And, as now, Sport is the viewers' favourite. But the public demand for more aggressive and dangerous sports has made them impossible for humans to play.

Fortunately, this lack of suitable fleshy participants has provided a new growth area for the Robotics industry, which was previously in a slump due to the saturation of the Industrial market. Prodex 4 have invested 200 million Euro Dollars perfecting the sport of BOTICS.

Each game consists of a series of matches played on a square walled court. Two droids knock a metal ball back and forth trying to score in each other's goal. Each droid can encase itself to power a shot towards the other player. But do this wisely—overuse will cause damage to your droid and it may eventu-



For the winner, the shot has to strike again. For the loser... nothing!

ally explode! Each player can exercise the option to take time out during games for repairs. Later courts include walls that appear and block off your half of the court. There a few difficulties of opponents and five ball types.

The problem with Botics is that it's a simple idea that's been over worked. The 3D courts are great to look at but very tough to play in because it's not easy working out where to position your bat. To get proficient is going to take quite a bit of practice, and there just isn't enough in the game to encourage you make that effort.

David Upchurch

5
596
AMIGA
RELEASE DETAILS
AMIGA £19.99 OUT NOW
ATARI ST £19.99 OUT NOW
 No other versions planned

HILL STREET BLUES

Can you take the heat on the beat? Find out in KRISALIS' forthcoming tie-in with the famous cop TV show

It's not going to be a simple job to take the heat on the beat. In the hands of the less imaginative Hill Street Blues, it has already been a ropey job, with a lot of crap which would be left over from the original but also totally inappropriate. It's mood and atmosphere that's the real key, says

game with a sense of... you take the... with the wo... the time tab... Trying to keep... 's about it, w... reports come... eight other v... you are alwa... don't over re... like being tr... SWAT team h... well looking fo... well for long... of the ultim...

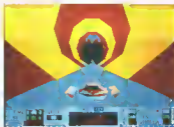
Krisalis Software have been working on the game for the last 8 months, during the summer in Spring. Most of the time had been spent in zoning the city to work. There are a lot of things that you can do while walking and driving around the city going to work or the gym, and generally living their lives. The level is quite a bit very clever, at times it's a bit of a puzzle or level crossings, for example, it's possible to play in accelerated real time, with the view of the city darkening as night falls. The game is a bit more than a bit of a puzzle, it's a bit more than a bit of a puzzle, it's a bit more than a bit of a puzzle. We've got the finished product, which is great, it's a

David Upchurch





On the approach to a junction in the tunnels, use the map screen to alert radar which results in best.



Sending your Shockwave down the tunnel's well clear any thing in its path.

S.T.U.N. RUNNER

Playing *S.T.U.N. Runner* in the arcades was an strange affair. The speed of the graphics and the motor bike style cabinet were enough to keep coins falling for a couple of hours. After a little while, however, it became apparent that *S.T.U.N. Runner* was decidedly light on the gameplay front. The aim - to collect stars which are lying on the floor of the Spread Tunnel Underground Network - not really being the sort of goal which hooks you immediately.

The home conversion is reasonably programmed, but inevitably crippled by the sluggishness of the machines. The problem is compounded by the fact that rather than opting for

speedy wire-frame graphics, in an attempt to keep the game as close to the cost-up original as possible, time-consuming FR routines re issued for every frame.

The result, of course, is that the frame rate is quite awful, jumping along in big steps. It looks more like a kiddies' flicker-book than 3D animation.

From the menu you can opt to play in either easy, intermediate or hard tunnels. Controlling your Runner craft is simple. You can move it left or right, aim its laser up and down and fire. While during each wave (unless you collect enough green stars), you can send a Shockwave down the tunnel, which sweeps out everything in its path.

What you can't do (and this is really the essence of the game) is directly affect the speed of your vehicle. Like a semi intelligent car, your Runner craft will slow down or speed up in an appropriate manner to the bends, hills and straights it encounters. So the aim, and indeed the only way to get through each stage in time, is to position your craft in the tunnel in a way that will allow it to travel at the highest speed. Stay on the outside walls of the tunnel while going through corners, maximizing the effect of the centrifugal force.

In the first stage, the green stars indicate the best route, but from there on you've got to find your own way. Making a bad decision and taking a corner badly will cause the *S.T.U.N. Runner* to slow down severely. Along the way boost pads will increase your speed way beyond its normal 300mph ceiling. These boosts only last a short time, however and they're no substitute for shrewd tunnel-positioning.

The deeper into the game you go, the busier the tunnels become. Most craft can be blown up with your on-board lasers, but some are completely indestructible. They must simply be avoided.

The level of difficulty sometimes a bit incongruous with the stage you have selected. Many of the intermediate levels seem a lot easier than the later levels on the "Easy" stage. The difficulty is unfortunately governed entirely by the time limit. No amount of bashing and crashing will cause your Runner to conk out. Instead it just scrapes along the walls.

S.T.U.N. Runner, the coin-op, was entertaining solely for the speed of its polygon graphics. How has this tricky conversion gone for Domark?

Domark's attempt at *S.T.U.N. Runner*, aside from the frame-rate, is a perfectly decent conversion of a rather disappointing arcade game. If you want absolutely bonkers over the original, it's worth a look. Otherwise, don't bother.

● Jim Douglas

ICE PREPLAY

▶ Interesting and original game concept

▶ Very easy to control

▶ A lot resembling to quarter length

▶ Some style isn't appeal to all, although it probably suits many of the stars.

▶ Simplest play idea to the need for speed

Release Details

AMIGA	TBA	Early '91
ATARI ST	TBA	Early '91
IBM PC	TBA	Early '91

ICE PREPLAY

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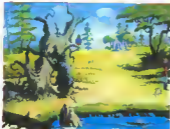
▶ Some style isn't appeal to all, although it probably suits many of the stars.

▶ Simplest play idea to the need for speed

Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£3.99 or £14.95 dx	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD CPC	£9.99 or £14.99 dx	OUT NOW
CGA	£9.99 or £14.99 dx	OUT NOW

No other versions planned



This bad bear is making those poor bees. Luckily you've picked up a small fish in another location, so that's answer!



Yet another gorgeous scene. You probably can't see it in this screenshot, but that ant hill is alive with scurrying ants. And after the effect with the bees, you probably won't be surprised to find that that King is called... Anthony! How smart!

The King's Quest series is one of the most popular of Sierra's graphic adventures and, although the games don't seem to follow any particular narrative path, this latest creation is firmly in the KQ tradition with astonishing graphics, loads of puzzles, and a whopping great dose of American schmaltz. If Roberta Williams carries on writing games like this, she's sure to earn a place in the All-Time Hall of Yuk...but more of that anon.

Just in case you haven't sampled these games before, what you see has never been closer to what you get. The graphics are practically ARE the game: beautiful fantasy locations are loaded from disk (yawn, unless you've got a hard drive) and your little animated human prances about the screen under your direction.

In previous KQ's, this graphic presentation has been marred by the - ngh - necessity to actually type in a few words of English as in the old style adventures, but KQV has finally done away with that and replaced the typing with an icon bar across the top of the screen. Since this isn't displayed by default, you have to summon it with a keypress and then toggle along the icon list until you get the one you want.

The icons at your command are pretty basic: LOOK, TALK, and USE type options but these are all you'll need to steer King Graham of Davenport (yup, the yuk starts here) about his kingdom in search of his castle, kidnapped by the wicked magician Mordack.

That's because, despite the 256 colour VGA glorious display, the game behind the graphics is about as trenchant as village saga. As you wander from pretty scene to pretty scene, you encounter various characters or situations that, if handled in the right way, can aid you in your quest. For the most part, this process involves finding objects and then using them in the right context. To make things easier, the program doesn't allow you to use objects in inappropriate circumstances, so you always know whether you've got it wrong. Text messages also do their best to suggest, by implication, what you should be doing. For example, when confronted at the beginning of the game by a hostile snake, ineffective actions are greeted by a message advising

KINGS QUEST V

This latest installment of the highly popular SIERRA series features 97 megabytes of data. Can you handle it?

you that 'That isn't going to work!' is essential away for words to be correct. If you know you've got to find something to put the bear or God into the beast.

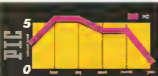
YUK!

Previous KQ's have shied a tendency to cloying cuteness in their scenarios, and KQ5 is not only no exception, but seems bent on taking this tendency to new extremes.

First, you've got your chief character - King Graham of Davenport. This sounds suspiciously like an attempt to parody Lord British of Britannia from the Ultima series, but I'm sure Sierra would never stoop so low. For those of us who know the real Davenport, however, it's a bit of a joke.

...with a... and... God... owl... immediate... and... comic... tale... to... fate... the... the... to you... do... it... what... any...

The scenes that follow, as Graham and his poetic mate around Davenport, they are confronted by numerous personages who are in every way as bland as themselves (check out the screenshot of Queen Bertrice for a typical example). All this is very well, and - on past experience - to be expected from a game by Roberta Williams, who seems to delight in putting cutesy touches in her games (remember the animation sequence when Roshi fell down the stairs?), but there has to be a limit. Just as game design guru Chi's Crawford argues that there is a threshold of realism in



Some initial measurements showed the degree of shabby furniture may alter furniture's parameters, but the graphic appearance of the game area before and after a month of tests, the challenges have remained up and almost constant forms and you talk - thinking will allow better to tackle them to overcome part of the training challenges. And even it's not time to keep you going.

IBM PC

850

Set your standards for data requirements with a micro-loading technique of hard disk storage required. You can rely from the 3.5-inch floppy disks, but should also make sure of 100MB space. You also need at least 1MB of RAM and 1MB of free space. Furthermore, the graphics card must be at least 1MB, and of course, at least a few MB to keep the application safe. Current hard disk boards supported. All other details for installation.

RELEASE DATE

ATARI ST	ET&A	MARCH
IBM PC VGA	£39.95	OUT NOW
IBM PC VGA	£84.95	OUT NOW
CD-ROM	£84.95	TBA
AMIGA	ET&A	FEB

No other version planned

WOT? NO WORDS?

Sierra's new command system for KQ5 is a bit of a disappointment. First, you have to call up the icon bar whenever you need it. Second, it always comes up with the icon selected and not with the last one used, so you have to toggle along the bar for the one you need. There can also be a few keyboard commands instead of a mouse and keyboard used in command select.

One way to play KQ5 is with mouse AND keyboard using the mouse to directions and the keyboard for roguing commands. But you can't help being that Sierra could have produced a richer interface for the new game.

Cedric is always on hand to warn you about potentially dangerous situations. He warned you not to enter this desert, but you didn't listen, did you? Most of the desert consists of repeating, featureless scullery and acts as an effective boundary to the map.

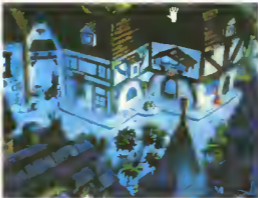
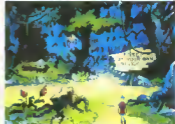


...Yes, that and the link. The bear has left with the fish, and now Queen Beatrix (yukkkk) needs you with a honeycomb. Now, what can we use THAT for...?



A typically superb screen from the lengthy intro sequence that sets the scene for new players.

More evidence of the game's pedestrian attitude (it should that be non-realistic)? The game designers warn you to be absolutely sure that you don't wander in here unprepared. Of course you do, and you get burned like a frog for your pains...



The town is one of the first places you visit. As in other games, you've got characters wandering about, but you can't converse with anyone except those in the shops. The latter usually alert you when to them you need or possible sub-plots that will enable you to get them...

games, so I'd argue that there's a threshold of cute. Just the right amount warms the cockles of your heart - overstep the mark and it's time for the barf bag.

KQ5 hovers dangerously on this borderline. Cedric's antics are followed up by some of the most sickly dialogue I've ever seen in a game. For example, in the bakers...

BAKER: Enjoy our custard pie!
KING GRAHAM: Oh! I'm sure I will!
Exit King Graham, and your s truly to the bathroom. Do we really have to sugar-coat our custard pies to this extent?

At the end of the day, however, KQ5 survives as all simple games do by urging you onward to solve the next puzzle. What happens if I try the

honeycomb on the snake? Nothing, but what if I return to the grones' clearing and offer it to them...or perhaps they'd prefer the pie? And is it that such a pretty doll the little grone-er's got? And wasn't there a little girl in the village-willage who wanted a doll for her own? It may be cute, but it's still horribly compelling.

In any other game, this degree of to-and-fro would be unbearable, but the graphic excellence of KQ5 and the size of the challenge mix just enough salt in with the sugar to keep you lapping it up. Roberta Williams is rapidly carving herself a niche as the Barbara Cartland of games and, like most of BC's work, this is total, unashamed yink...but I like it.

● Steve Cook

ECO PHANTOMS

Save the Earth - again! - in **SPLINTER VISION/ ELECTRONIC ZOO's** exploration extravaganza

This is definitely NOT the homecoming you were expecting. Returning to Earth after six years in deep space you were hoping for a nice cup of tea and a chance to put your feet up, but Fate has rather different - and deadlier - plans in mind.

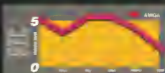
The Earth on your view screen is not the one you remember. Three huge domes bulge from its pocked and ravaged surface, housing machinery designed to drain its once-bountiful resources - the ECO PHANTOMS have invaded. Having destroyed their own planetary system in a foolish nuclear war, these evil scavengers scour the Galaxy for fertile planets to plunder.

With the giant five-ship Planet Drainer they collect a planet's resources and transfer them to their home worlds in an attempt to rebuild them.

As you near Earth, an alien craft intercepts you and the ECO PHANTOM crew board your ship. While they search, you sneak aboard their ship and trap the enemy on your vessel. Your task ahead is clear: you must infiltrate and shut-down the three enemy domes. Only then can you attempt to destroy Planet Drainer, and reverse the devastation of your planet.

David Birchour

THE ORBITALCAMERA. When you find an alien building your next entrance code to be allowed to read a robot it and search. Each code is made up of a combination of the three issues on the left, which you can select by clicking on them. Your selections are shown on the 41 central in the center. Read the warning code or take too long and your true identity will be revealed - prepare for battle!



The excellent graphics rights combination of John Wood offers you a special feature. This is not just a game, it's a puzzle. It's like a code to get a bonus on what's going on and making a map to absolutely conquer. Show you get over the slightly high scoring score, you'll find you've got a long-lasting and impressive score sheet.

836

AMIGA

ATARI ST

IBM PC

824.95

824.95

824.95

IMMINENT

IMMINENT

IMMINENT

Macintosh version planned

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.95	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£24.95	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£24.95	IMMINENT

Macintosh version planned

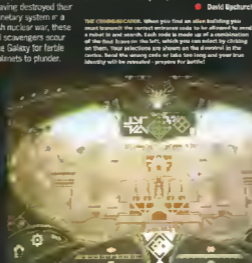
THE COURSE. Controlled by the mouse, all game interaction is carried out by clicking on boxes. Move the cursor towards the top of the Main View and click the left mouse button to reverse your ship forward down the river. Look to be displayed in a similar way to Dungeon Master, but somewhat. Move the cursor to the sides of the Main View and click to rotate the ship. Clicking the right button will fire a low-powered laser beam strong enough to destroy most in-line structures.



THE VENUS LAB. Some gutters are forward with deadly alien spheres which will swing in and attack. If you aren't dead most quickly they will swing to see hull and start feeding off the machinery, eating the essential factors of your ship. Here you can create antidotes.



THE LASER CANNON. If you get an entrance code among them the building's entrance defenses will start firing on you and you'll have to get through. You have to find the building's base areas and shoot them but before your health is gone.



THE MAIN VIEW. Looking down one of the gutters of the final view in the Desert of Ahim. The three free domes are located in the Pacific and the North Pole.



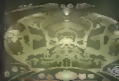
THE STATUS PANEL. The control panel acts as a compass and also indicates possible directions of travel. The four bars around the panel indicate the most of several important factors in the ship, such as health strength and level of visual distortion.

THE COLLECTOR. Destroying alien machines will raise them to the main interface, which you can pick up. These spheres are beneficial in several ways, such as topping up your fuel and even helping to control the weather in certain areas.

THE ROBOT CHAMBER. You have five robots, each with varying skills. One can give special kind of eye to restore require. The other made to blow buildings and finally for protection. Each is made with a laser to protect them from alien guards.



THE RECORDER'S WORLD. This is where the Record Bureau live. You can't leave their Red and yellow. In return they'll help you run the ship, when you've assigned them to these areas.



THE ENGINE ROOM. The flow machines here record several pieces of your ship's movement. You can adjust too speed of your ship using the throttle. However, using the throttle will slow the fuel too long without using and they'll react.

S P O **4D** R T S B O X I N G

"4D Sports Boxing is absolutely brilliant... the heaviest move pretty much like their real-life counterparts... Just goes, Oooooooooo (Crunch)!"
—TBO HERO 30%

"...This is the best game I have ever played..."
—Don Mottrick, Problems of Distinction, Software Inc.

"Seconds out... Round One! The crowd leapt to their feet as the fighters rain down on each other... was that a knock out? He's down... what a knock out. This is boxing at it's absolute best. What a brilliant fight!"

"4D Sports Boxing is simply one of the best sports simulations around... Superb." —The One 90%



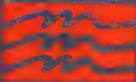
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All versions are consistently presented (the Amstrad version is consistent and very informative), with the IBM version being all the latest and best game software of IBM's original design. It doesn't seem to give you any joy, but the original graphics and sound are a little better than the game. The Amstrad version introduces some breaks gradually as the user is able to see what's going on in the other two computers. And the Amstrad's best multiple-player option and you've got a winning game you'll still be finding in a year's time.

AGE RATING: 835

AMIGA

Graphics look identical to the other PCs, although the Amiga version has a better sound. The Amiga has a better sound, but naturally you'll get into the game and all the other bits and pieces. Technically it's a little better, but great fun is, especially with the Amiga in mind.

AGE RATING: 835

ATARI ST

Identical in every respect to the Amiga version, except that it's a little better in the Amiga version (especially in the Amiga version).

AGE RATING: 870

IBM PC

IBM's graphics are, again, available per foot, and they're better than the Amiga's. IBM's is a little better than the Amiga's, but naturally you'll get into the game and all the other bits and pieces. Technically it's a little better, but great fun is, especially with the Amiga in mind.

AGE RATING: 831

CGA

The most attractive of the 8-bit versions, although the Amiga's 32-bit version is better. The Amiga's graphics are, again, available per foot, and they're better than the Amiga's. IBM's is a little better than the Amiga's, but naturally you'll get into the game and all the other bits and pieces. Technically it's a little better, but great fun is, especially with the Amiga in mind.

AGE RATING: 826

AMSTRAD CPC

Graphics are excellent, using the Amstrad's 4-bit graphics to great effect with cars that look very realistic. The Amiga's graphics are, again, available per foot, and they're better than the Amiga's. IBM's is a little better than the Amiga's, but naturally you'll get into the game and all the other bits and pieces. Technically it's a little better, but great fun is, especially with the Amiga in mind.

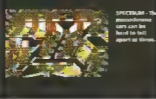
AGE RATING: 830

SPECTRUM

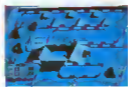
Track graphics are excellent, but the Amiga's graphics are, again, available per foot, and they're better than the Amiga's. IBM's is a little better than the Amiga's, but naturally you'll get into the game and all the other bits and pieces. Technically it's a little better, but great fun is, especially with the Amiga in mind.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW
CGA	£10.99/£14.99/£14.99/£14.99	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD CPC	£10.99/£14.99/£14.99	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£10.99/£14.99/£14.99	OUT NOW



SPECTRUM - The Amstrad version is the best to buy.



IBM PC - The CGA graphics are the best, but the Amiga's are a little better.



AMIGA - With a built-in joystick, the Amiga is the best to buy.

IVAN 'IRONMAN' STEWART'S SUPER OFF ROAD



CGA - As the best in the money bag in the top left corner for more purchasing power later.

VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC'S 'Ironman' or OOMARK's Badlands - Which is King of the Road?

Who is Ivan Stewart? I've never heard of him! (Then read the box, you ignorant devil!) But if this game is an accurate representation of the sort of antics he gets up to, he certainly deserves the epithet 'Ironman'. These are not your usual high-speed gentlemen-of-the-road events - each is a gladiatorial struggle for survival on a rugged earth track. The trucks jostle and wrestle for first place whilst plunging into gravel pits, climbing steep slopes and ploughing through water-filled craters.

Your aim (and your friends') is to finish ahead of all the computer-controlled cars in a set of courses - fast and you lose one of your two credits. After each race you're awarded prize money, the amount depending on where you finished. This can be used to buy various upgrades which, for once, have a noticeable effect on your car's performance.

Control is simple: rotate left/right and accelerate. Each car is equipped with a limited number of Nitros, which can be kicked in at any time to give you that extra squirt of speed to take you into the lead or, if things are going badly, just back into the running. It's hugely satisfying using one of the last minute to blast you past your mate's car and over the finishing line!

● David Upchurch

WHO IS IRONMAN?

You may not know who Ivan Stewart is, but the Americans certainly do. Since 1971 he's built up an impressive record as one of the top drivers in the lengthiest sport of Off Road Racing. In 1982 Stewart joined the Topole Factory Team and has completed far more races, taking off-road trucks to stadium races (as depicted in the game), as well as extensive toppling 250-mile marcap trials through the deserts of Southwest USA and Mexico. It was his repeated success in these marcap trials of endurance that earned him his nickname 'Ironman'. Can you live up to his reputation?

GAME SPECS

'IRONMAN'

Number Of Vehicles On Track 4 - Up to 3 (2 on Spectrum and CPC) can be human controlled.

Number Of Tracks 8 - The bumps, pits, jumps and ditches make for lots of things to fumble action. The different tracks are not played directly one after another - you may play two tracks then play the first again - but driving in the opposite direction - so it'll be some time before you're good enough to see them all.

Upgrades

- Nitro - Vital for boosting you to the front when lagging
- Tires - Reduce skidding and improve cornering
- Shocks - Reduce bounce and improve ground contact
- Acceleration - Reduce time to get to top speed
- Top Speed - Increases maximum speed possible

You can have up to 99 Nitros. The rest of the upgrades have five possible levels of effectiveness. One of your two credits can be traded in for \$200,000 to buy upgrades with.

BADLANDS

3 - Up to 2 can be human controlled

4 - Pretty straight forward, just knock rounds or land as possible. Occasional hazards, such as oil slicks and spikes, and danger zones tracks are detached, with opening and closing short-cut gates, scrapes firing at you from towers and other goodies. Later you can bump into track-side objects to cause further mayhem (a track over water forces you to make the track slippery). The different tracks are played one after another, so it won't be long before you've seen all the variations.

- Missiles - Allow you to totally destroy other cars
- Shields - Protect you from attack by other vehicles
- Speed - Increase maximum speed possible
- Traction - Increase rate of acceleration
- Tires - Improve road holding when cornering
- Brakes - Stop you reduce speed more quickly

You can have up to 99 Missiles and Shields. The rest of the upgrades have six possible levels of effectiveness.

BADLANDS

From the post-Apocalypse rubble they came men and women so hard that they used barbed wire for dental floss. No more Mr Softy Super Sonik! looks for them. They armoured their cars and mounted cannons on top and took up the dangerous and ruthless pastime of racing in the Badlands, the desolate runs left after the nuclear conflict.

The bare bones of the game are identical to Super Off Road. You (and a friend) play on eight tracks. Finishing behind the competitor drones loses you one of your two credits. Occasionally

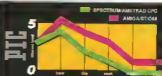
gold wrenches appear on the track and can be picked up by running over them. These can be used to buy upgrades between races.

Controls are the same as Super Off Road, except there are no Nitros, but this is compensated for by your roof-mounted cannon. Shooting another car slows them down and also makes them drop any wrenches they may have picked up, so you can nip in there and take them for yourself (ha!)

● David Upchurch



CG4 - In this city there's a thousand things I want to shoot at you... (Yes, it's spot the lyric! times)



Medium presentation. The action holds your attention for a while, and the response and control are good, but on Spectrum and CPC the more graphics and animation kill your performance very quickly.

BEST GRAPHICS

780



AMIGA

This is just a straight rehash of Amiga's earlier Super Off Road with some visual variety to be honest, if both for speed of progress. While it's well presented and fun for a while, eventually with a track to shoot it's more nothing than to really grab your attention unless you're a committed fan of the genre.

BEST SOUND

780



ATARIST

Again, nothing more to report on the front track - identical to the Amiga.

BEST VALUE

765



CG4

Amiga's progress, this is the best 3-bit rendition of the game. Slightly less, but the background graphics are a more range of graphic freedom. It's a pity that the same as 16-bit rendition.

BEST PRICE

656



AMSTRAD CPC

By far the worst version. The background graphics are identical to the Spectrum's very slowly and lacking any 3D effect (a. Some games built-in to avoid looking, this might have been acceptable had the game played slightly, but it doesn't, everything is perfectly sane, Amiga.

BEST SPEED

689



SPECTRUM

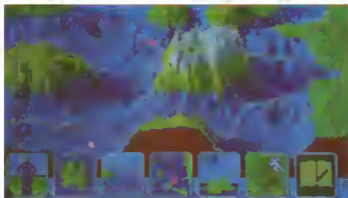
Very slow background. Because the cars are presented differently our old friend the Cortex-Cash game set again. Mechanically it's more than a minor niggle - when the cars are moving, it's hard to keep track of which is yours in the heat of the race.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARIST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	IMMINENT
CG4	£19.99cart	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD CPC	£9.99cpc£14.99dk	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£9.99cpc£14.99dk	OUT NOW



AMSTRAD CPC - Yes, this is NOT a Spectrum conversion! Do and adjust your computer... the two versions are near identical.



ACE PARTY

Look to control your character

Character control

Interaction

Lots of depth

It needs to be seen just how intelligent the most ardent characters will be

Release Details

AMIGA	\$24.99	Pub
ST	\$26.99	Pub

FLAMES of FREEDOM

Microprose prepare to launch their assault on the New Year market with one of the biggest sequels around...

Maelstrom Games has been working on *Flames of Freedom* ever since the completion of *Midwinter*, and it has now reached the final straight in the development race.

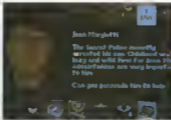
Rather than simply producing a different scenario based on the *Midwinter* games mechanics, the whole game shell has been recreated to make *Flames of Freedom* a truly massive and original game. Maelstrom paid close attention to criticisms of the original game, in order to adapt the game with everyone's tastes.

The most universally criticised element was that the number of characters which had to be controlled was simply too large. It wasn't possible to keep tabs on all the characters at once, and the game tended to be a massive juggling act rather than a linear path to a successful conclusion.



Driving over the sandy dunes in your jeep. The status area at the top of the screen shows directions and state of affairs.

So, *Flames of Freedom* offers only one character to control, but this central hero can have virtually any characteristic you want. Using the character designer, you can select from a massive array of chins, eyes, noses, ears, hairstyles and mouths, gradually piece together your ideal looking agent. A character will also be endowed with a brace of attributes which will affect their ability to interact with other people.



Jean Margotte, an island resident. Recently in trouble with the cops, Jean may well be willing to help your cause. But which approach should you try?



Making faces. From a wide selection of fleshy stunts, you can construct your very own special agent.

Since you are essentially alone in your mission, it's vital to control the indigenous personnel from each island in an effective manner. When you bump into one of these people you can opt to use your Charm, sex appeal, authority, reasoning or deception to influence them. If you beg too much, however, you won't have much authority. If you rush around threatening everyone, no-one will listen to your reasoning.

Along with the niceties of interaction, there's the more physical side of the game: rushing around from island to island, blowing up enemy installations and claiming each atoll for the Free World. Since the game offers an enormous play area, it isn't desirable to have to watch all of the driving. Instead, an autopilot option allows you to plot your destination and let the computer get on with getting you there. You will only be alerted or disturbed if there's some fighting to be done.



Driving over the sandy dunes in your jeep. The status area at the top of the screen shows directions and state of affairs.

DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR
SLOT THESE INTO YOUR



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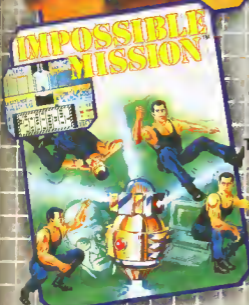
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Mexico, March 2-stage* and a stadium through the sands. Visibility is reduced by the sand storms.



TOYOTA CELICA GT RALLY

With Carlos Sainz recently winning the Lombard RAC and confirming Toyota's World Championship title, the timing of GREMLIN's rally simulation couldn't be much better...

But timing isn't everything. And a game pitched at the simulation side of motor-sport rather than taking the route of more intense appeal (a la Lotus) needs to be both accurate and accessible. Thankfully, the variety of rally stages incorporated (the whole World Championship, in fact) plus the co-driver briefing stage serve to bolster the 3D driving sections which are fun, if not awe-inspiring.

Your aim, quite simply, is to racket your Toyota Celica GT 4 through English, Mexican and Norwegian stages and win the World Championship.

It's advisable to get some driving practice before attempting the World Championship. You can swoot up on a typical stage from each nation to get to grips with the English rain, Mexican sand and treacherous Norwegian snow.

If you so desire, the computer will take care of all the gear changing for you. Since lots of the process of chucking the cars about relies on early gear changes, and the computer inevitably has to rely on a rapid loss of speed before it will change down for you, this can be a bit of a disadvantage and is only really recommended for novice drivers.

The motivation which keeps rally drivers pushing their cars and themselves to the limit is sim-

CELICA, CELICA LOTUS, BUCKLE UP!
However, it does offer some long-term excitement and will hold your interest at a high level for a longer period. Arcade gamers will probably find their efforts frustrated (possibly because they haven't used the in-car preparation properly).

LAP TIMES
820

ATARI ST
The speed of the ST driving section is slow, but not dull. The home user can be a little jolly and the price benefits of this are obvious. However, the physical control of the so often is excellent and the report of the various systems and report aspects of the hardware are impressive.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£4.99	JANUARY
AANGA	£4.99	IMMINENT

No other releases planned



ple. Since everyone starts at staggered times, you never know - until the end of the stage - how well or otherwise the other drivers are doing. Drooping a couple of seconds can mean the difference between first and tenth place. As a result, there's absolutely no respite. Whenever you feel you've reached a piece of the course where you can get up some speed, the biggest concern is that the other driver's have travelled down the same stretch last!

Once the World Championship attempt has been undertaken, the option to make co-driver's notes should always be accepted. Here a top-down view of the next stage can be viewed. Using a number system from one to six, speech messages can be placed at any point, offering clipped but recognisable information about the course ahead. "Easy left", "Hard Left", "Right then Hard Left", etc.

This part is far less painful than it sounds and the precise location along the route when your co-driver will gurgel out the instructions is vital to



The real car and the blue car had a race. No. Not a Moby Wey about but instead a life and death battle for survival on the track.

Unlike the other two racing games we've reviewed this month, Uni Soft's Jupiter's Masterdrive offers a close-up view of the car cut out as well as a miniature schematic of the status area at the bottom of the screen. It also offers a host of different vehicles to drive.

The action being located in space doesn't really affect the gameplay - except to serve as a believable environment in which the different tracks and vehicles exist.

The main menu screen is represented by Jupiter and its surrounding moons. From here the player(s) can opt to play either a course from any level or enter the Masterdrive contest itself, where they play all courses on all levels in turn, with bonus stages.

Each level has a simple aim, to complete the requisite number of laps, collecting extra fuel and cash items lying on the floor. If you incur too much damage - either by crashing into the trackside objects, other vehicles or being shot - your car will crank out. And all the



your success. Decent preparation will save you those valuable seconds which could make all the difference in the final scores. Certainly in the Mexican and Norwegian stages where there are bends when you can't see a bloody thing, it's handy to be told if there's a harpin bend coming up.

The driving itself is pretty good but you must learn to drive like a rally driver, allowing the car to slide rather than trying to keep in the middle of the road all the time. Turning is easy and powerful through the bends is tricky, but can be attained with practice.

It rapidly becomes apparent that any mistakes can cost you dearly in the rankings. Straying too far from the track results in a 20 second penalty while smashing up your motor will add a full 2 minutes, virtually impossible to make up.

Fans of Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge should be aware that this is a completely different style of game, but it's entertaining none-the-less.

■ Jim Douglas

JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE

Ubisoft ride in (just) on the wave of top-down driving games. This time the action takes place in space...

extra engine-tuning and turbo you've bought will be lost.

Every satellite planet holds a race and a bonus track. Even if you perform awfully in the race, you can collect some bonus cash, fuel and repair icons in the bonus stages.

Should you choose to play two laps instead of the computer, the screen will split into two. While the play area is restricted, reducing your view of the track ahead, disciplined use of the scanner will see you through.

The graphics are smooth and appealing and the vehicles truly behave as you would expect. They range from straight space-racers through hovercraft to old-style formula one vehicles. Most are easy to control but the hovercraft are tricky and frustrating, the whole of the hovercraft track is bordered with dangerous damage-inflicting walls and areas which force you in unhelpful directions. Here the driving style needs to be nudgy and careful to avoid wrecking your vehicle. Since most of the fun is provided by squealing around the track as fast as possible, this stage seems to defeat the object a bit.



In order to race on a particular track, you must pay the entrance fee. Will the potential earnings be enough to cover your extra machine parts?

Most of the later stages offer short-cuts for beaver players to attempt. These, however, are often narrow and treacherous and coming a cropper up these allies will probably cost you dearly.

Aside from the tricky hovercraft levels, playing Masterdrive is great fun. It doesn't offer massive long term appeal, but will keep driving fans happy for a good few months.

● Jim Douglas

5
0

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

AMIGA

Although Masterdrive may appear to offer only a regularised short-lived entertainment, its distributed level ensures that you will keep coming back. It's equally enjoyable against a friend's computer, and the machine-controlled cars are impressively well behaved.

840

AMIGA

The settings on the Amiga make it super smooth. And while the graphics aren't particularly sharp, the tracks are slick and smooth. The two player mode may seem a little cumbersome, but this compensated for later than to take what the top dog says. And that's the beauty of the Amiga.

RELEASE DETAILS

POWER	£24.95	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£24.95	JANUARY

No other versions planned

5
0

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

AMIGA

Carthage is initially rather slow to get into and it takes a while to get familiar to the on-line control system, but then you'll find you most become engrossed by slipping the ever increasing tension. However, I don't believe there's really enough in the game to keep the average gamer's interest up.

784

VERSION

The Taluses are impressive units well used and with real skill, making the race seem very real and just not to look at. The 3-D architecture, the feel of the driving and game is a subtle variation of some. Although the game is impressive as the computered Amiga, there are some periods available to enhance early units at 2.0 (more more features, more with real-time driving).

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.95	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.95	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

CARTHAGE

"...Alright. So, apart from irrigation, public education, hygiene, law and order and the roads, what have the Romans ever done for us?"



History question: Roman roads were all straight, hi Beauty

Carthage was once a powerful city on the Gulf of Tunis, its empire encompassing the Phoenician colonies of North Africa and Spain. Inevitably they came into conflict with the Romans who subsequently conquered them in the three Punic Wars.

Carthage is set in the third war, where our hero Diogenes, receives a visit from his local God. Taut who bestows upon him the "Power of Sight" which allows you to see your territory, cities and armies, basically this serves as a strategic map from where most of the game is played, the objective being to change history and defeat the invading Romans.

This is achieved by creating armies and mobilising them effectively. Units available are cavalry, infantry archers, catapults and elephants, which are all organised into battalions. Actual combat is resolved by zooming in on the army from the strategic map. Here you move each battalion by clicking on it and then selecting a destination, should this be an army it will attack

or follow, depending on whose side it's on. However, your armies (being a rather mercenary lot) will desert if not paid, so you must sustain a sound economy. This is done by effective distribution of your nation's wealth. Gold is transported via your chariot and each journey features a 3-D arcade sequence in which you race along dodging logs. Roman assassins also hinder your journey and the view changes to one from above where you must shred your opponents' wheels with your spikes.

However to me it didn't really seem to have much effect on the actual game, but served more as a diversion from the rest of the wargaming aspect. The map is fractally generated and looks very impressive, a useful feature is the option to rotate and zoom in at will. The sound too is good, but there isn't really much of it, as for the game itself it can be quite engaging but I'd only recommend it to those with a taste for wargaming.

● Khalid Howlad

LINE OF FIRE

It's no life for the weak-hearted in the Line of Fire. US Gold endeavors to out-gore Sam Pekinpah.

Blue and Red, combat team, heroes of the free world and two man apocalypse are in up to their necks in bad guys again. This time, their mission was to work deep behind enemy lines and steal the top secret Rapier machine gun. They got to the gun, but before they could escape an enemy patrol stumbled upon them and sounded the alarm.

You come into the game at the fateful moment when you are discovered by the enemy guerrillas and from there on in, the shooting hardly stops.

The screen is presented in 3D perspective, with the bad guys appearing just about every where. Guiding your crosshair sight around every where with your mouse, bullets can be fired by holding down the left button. You've got an unlimited supply of ammunition, so you might as well carry on firing. The right button launches a missile which basically clears the whole screen of



Line of Fire is both easy to get into and difficult. The first stage acts as an easy preliminary level where you can get used to the mouse control and start up some strategy. From level 3, though, the game starts to narrow, and it will be quite a while before the enemy quantities ease in.

820 AMIGA

The graphics are such AMIGA, and fast enough, the realism of the machine gun control is brilliant. But the textures are dated and characterless. The action is normal and earthy, but the overall feel is of a great deal of being going on.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.95	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.95	OUT NOW

#-bit versions to follow late Jan



These intermediate stages are tougher than they look. Even after you've finished off the bullets, the other keep shooting.



Take a weapon, any weapon. Pick through the available add-ons on the left. Then stick an one of the four bases on the right to best fit to the task. Control is a breeze!

Now this is a hot hell war. She has following a few well-aimed shells its going to need more than a bit of plastering to look like new!

And still the Ultra War continues, with hopes of a diplomatic peace settlement dashed by the accidental shooting down of the South Peace Envoy's jet as it crossed our lines.

"At dawn the Southern forces launched a heavy artillery bombardment on Northern lines. Thankfully, 99.99% of the incoming shells were eliminated by the lasers of orbiting defence satellites.

"In retaliation the Northern generals launched a massed troop offensive. Unfortunately, most were killed as soon as they entered No-Man's

Land by anti-personnel hover mines and all survivors were captured.

"Suffice to say, no ground was taken and the lines are still drawn as they have been for the last ten years. This is Kate Ansey reporting from the Front Line for North News."

The Ultra War. Two massive superpowers, the North and the South, locked in a futile stalemate, their defensive systems so extensive and advanced that any major offensives are suicidal they are instantly identified and counter-acted. The only effective way to make telling blows against the enemy is to airlift specially trained

covert troops behind the enemy's lines.

This is where you come in. You control a Mauler class assault tank - a highly armoured, highly powerful, highly manoeuvrable and highly dangerous piece of hardware! At the beginning of this game you are given a checklist of fifteen missions, with ticks beside any you've completed. There's a basic shoot-em-up mission to get you straight into the game and allow you to learn the basics of control. From then on things get a little more tricky. You could find yourself doing anything from rescuing hostages to escorting a convoy of supply trucks to recovering a downed satellite.

You can flick through the missions, look at their briefings and maps, and see which you fancy. Once you've chosen you get the opportu-



In the first stage, the base goes on specifically like an old-school style. Hold the buttons down and sweep the screen.

enemy vehicles, boops and rockets. You begin the mission with three rockets. Extras, like extra energy, can be picked up by shooting packing assets lying on the floor.

If you opt for a two-player game, each player will have to look after their own half of the screen; any bits inflicted on their half, either from rockets, bullets or bombs will be deducted from the appropriate strength-meter.

Each coming stage is indicated by a little animated map. You begin your mission in the enemy camp, with the soldiers hiding behind of barrels and hanging down from the rafters. Running through the corridors here is pretty easy, and making wide sweeping motions with the crosshairs will take out 60% of the enemy



Enemies should only be used as a last resort. They'll clear everything out sooner. Collect extra grenades as you go along.

soldiers. Along the way, it's vital to collect all the first aid boxes if you are to avoid the second stage.

Stage two takes place in the jungle, and survival will become increasingly difficult. Armored cars, helicopters, foot soldiers and gun emplacement all have to be dealt with.

Heavy prioritizing is necessary if you're going to make your way through the stage. Missiles from helicopters must be shot down first, since they inflict the most damage.

The much-touted screen-rotation routine works reasonably well, once you reach the end of a path, all the objects are moved around to give the impression of a camera panning round. This makes the game feel more believable. It works especially well on stage 2, when the jeep in which you ride is backing away from the enemy, and you're trying down a suppressing fire.

If you get killed with some credits remaining,

you have a couple of seconds' respite before you must start again. Since the screens carry on scrolling past, you can avoid an especially tricky stage.

Line of Fire offers little for strategy fans. It simply operates on basic reaction time and hand-to-eye coordination. But it's well implemented, and the sheer number of enemies on screen is very high. These points, and the new scrolling method will offer enough to justify its purchase to arcade action addicts.

● Jim Douglas



The wheel level helicopter. Purchasing grenades leap out of the back. Plug them, close and don't shoot the chopper.

BATTLE COMMAND

Have a 'barrel' of laffs with REALTIME/OCEAN's tank warfare game!

to select any of thirteen offensive and defensive attachments to fit into the four available weapon pods, which should be picked bearing in mind the mission requirements.

Then it's into action. There's an animated graphics sequence showing the Mariner being dropped into enemy territory, then the view switches to a view out of your cockpit generated from solid polygons. In the distance you can see the receding outline of your chopper. Now you're on your own. On your travels you'll see trees, hills, buildings and installations... and tanks, jeeps, attack choppers and jet tank-busters!

All of the major functions of the Mariner can be accessed using the mouse. In 'Active' mode you can move the tank by moving the mouse in the required direction and pressing the left button

will fire the currently active weapon. In 'Passive' mode a pointer appears, and can be used to click on various icons around the cockpit. It'm not normally a huge fan of this genre of 3D games. Often the thought of a game lasting 30 hours or so seems more like a threat than a bonus. Battle Command avoids this by breaking the game up into missions. They're going to take some time to master, and each provides a real sense of satisfaction on completion.

This isn't meant to be a rigorous future war simulator - the game is slanted more towards fun and action than some sort of pseudo-accessory - and it succeeds admirably. It may just be Battlezone for the 90s, but at least it's a thinking person's Battlezone.

● David Upchurch

5000

Daily, the presentation is great, with a very slick title screen and sophisticated, atmospheric graphics. However, once you try a mission and the program starts shifting you'll be hooked. The Mariner Mariner is impressive, and you can take the game with a minimum of fuss. The ability to change the Mariner to any order means you won't get the impression of your having one too tough, and the banking information, digital means that there's a look for every event.

ACE RATING

899

AMIGA

Was a fantastic game! The Mariner is a joy to operate. The graphics are superb and the sound is great. The Mariner Mariner is impressive, and you can take the game with a minimum of fuss. The ability to change the Mariner to any order means you won't get the impression of your having one too tough, and the banking information, digital means that there's a look for every event.

ACE RATING

899

ATARI ST

Against its competitors in the Amiga, the graphics are slightly less impressive, but the sound effects are great. The Mariner Mariner is impressive, and you can take the game with a minimum of fuss. The ability to change the Mariner to any order means you won't get the impression of your having one too tough, and the banking information, digital means that there's a look for every event.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£26.99	January

No other systems planned

THE COMPILATION PACK OF MEGA STARS

HOLLYWOOD

Collection



ROBOCOP

GHOSTBUSTERS II

INDIANA JONES

BATMAN



AMIGA ATARI ST

ocean

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The ACE guide to

THE GREATEST GAMES

of all time*



But hold your horses - don't scan through the lists and, in a burst of outrage at the omission of Mutant Squirrels from Zix IV, no ACE into ersatz conflict. We're not totally inflexible - indeed, later we'll tell you how you can nominate those forgotten classics for inclusion and win some software into the bargain. But first, understand what the criteria for nomination are:

- (1) The game must have originated on a home computer, or that's why games like Rainbow Islands and Planetoid (the definitive Defender clone on the BBC B) have (regrettably) been omitted. However, games that have radically mutated an arcade idea are valid too. Thrust despite its obvious Asteroid and Lunar Lander roots successfully made the two to make a totally different hybrid.
- (2) The game must be a 'landmark', in the sense that it introduced a new concept or technique into the gaming world and/or advanced the 'state-of-the-art' in its genre.
- (3) The game must be enjoyable - obviously! - and have long-lasting appeal.

We consider the games in this list to be essential to any gaming buff's collection, if not for their gameplay then simply for their place in history. Each game is described, and details provided on who manufactured it and on which format the game is best in. 'All formats' indicates that the game was classic on all implementations! Next month we hope to provide you with a details of where you can get some of the older titles.

As we mentioned at the start, these lists are not cast in stone and we're open to persuasion that we've missed our choices. If you have any suggestions, then write and tell us on a postcard at ACE Great Games, ACE, Box 2, Priory Court, 30-32 Framington Lane, London EC1R 3AU, along with your brief arguments.

A draw will be held on 8th March 1991 (a month after the second part), when we will draw ten cards from the bag and send you a FREE piece of software, so remember to add your name, address and computer format to the postcard. We have reserved three boxes of the building for the sacks of mail from Enraged of Chess!

PART 1

At long last,
ACE names the games
it considers to be the
Greatest Of All Time!

ADVENTURE GAMES

● The Hobbit

Melbourne House (Spectrum)

The game that put graphics on the adventure map (no pun intended), featuring over 20 (pretty good for the time) illustrations! Also famous for the first appearance of supposedly 'independent' characters, although all that seemed to happen was Thorin kept sitting down and singing about gold and Gandalf kept wandering off.

● Valhalla

Legend (Spectrum)

Probably the first (and prime) example of excessive media hype. A world populated again - by 'independent' characters (which meant that they never did what you asked them to), each location was depicted graphically, with a short text description below.

● Wonderland

Virgin Mastertronic/Magnetic Scrolls (PC)

Employing 'Magnetic Windows', The Scrolls rewrite the adventuring book. Powerful windowing system practically baushes the Typing

Bogie from what is essentially a traditional text/graphics adventure with the usual superb illustrations (including animation). Reviewed in ACE Issue 39.

● Adventureland

Adventure International (All formats)

The first of the Scott Adams adventure series, originally developed on the lanky TRS80 and later ported onto most 8-bit formats. Originally, these games were text only but graphics were added later. Few locations, but almost every one containing a devilish puzzle. The Scott Adams adventure series has influenced practically every traditional adventure game since.

● The Boggit

GRI/Delta 4 (All formats)

Early game by Fergus McNeil which showed that (a) utilities like The Quil could be used to produce commercial quality adventures and (b) that nothing in adventures - and especially not hobbits - was sacred. Fergus' satirical home-brew games launched an entire industry of ethic programmers that still produces adventure product today.

ARCADE ADVENTURES

● Android 2

Vortex (Spectrum)

Basically an isometric 3D maze shoot-'em-up, the aim was to shoot five giant worms in the head and thus win transport to the next level. Amazing (for the time) colourful scrolling graphics and gameplay that was both thoughtful and frenetic make this a true classic.

● Atic Atac

Ultimate Play the Game (Spectrum)

Pre-empted Gauntlet by allowing you to pick whether you wanted to play a warrior, wizard or thief. Set in a huge sprawling multi-level castle, you had to explore the different rooms, looking for colour-coded keys to locked doors and shooting the evil denizens, with the ultimate aim of finding the four parts to the Key of ACG and thus escape.

* PROBABLY



ADVENTURE GAMES The *Halls of the Things* on the ZX Spectrum. It may look a little primitive now, but these graphics were ground-breaking in their day.

● Halls of the Things

Crystal (Spectrum)

An overhead maze game - just you, lots of locked doors and hidden keys, and literally hundreds of hungry 'things'. The maze was primitive-looking, but this was made up for by the number of homing-in nasties on-screen at one time.

● Knight Lore

Ultimate Play the Game (Spectrum)

Another romp around a multi-roomed dungeon, each room was viewed from the top corner, thus affording a 3D-isometric view of the action. Basically a quest to find the different ingredients to a potion that would rid you of a werewolf curse, the highly-playable and unspeakably-addictive gameplay centred around leaping on precarious platforms while avoiding resident nasties. Still looks good now. Fantastic!

● Leisure Suit Larry I and II

Serra On-Line (PC)

LSL2 was the game that put PC entertainment on the map. Heavily prated, its promise (not fulfilled) of soft porn installed it on office hard disks throughout the nation. In fact, the game was quite able to stand on its own feet without the billion-ton, main attraction being the nerdish Larry Laffer who, in lounge suit and a state of eternal amorous endeavour, is constantly striking out in his search for the perfect mate. LSL2 wasn't so engaging, but LSL3, despite a slightly more disagreeable flirt with female figures, was another classic graphic adventure. LSL3 was reviewed in ACE Issue 28.



ARCADY ADVENTURES - *Halls of the Things* on the ZX Spectrum. The bare-boning graphics were considered by the speed and number of on-screen enemies things got tough.

PLATFORM-BASED GAMES

● Hunchback

Ocean (C64/Spectrum)

The first licensed coin-op conversion. Make your way across Notre Dame's turrets (through umpteen screens of gaping pits, spear-topping guards and fireballs) to rescue Esmerelda.

● Impossible Mission

Epyx/US Gold (C64)

'Destroy him, my robots'. The evil Prof. Elvin Alombender is holding the world to ransom with a nuclear bomb. It's your job to infiltrate his complex, search rooms for the codes that will help you progress, while avoiding a range of deadly 'droids', and eventually defuse the nuke. But that's scream when you fell into a bottomless pit.

● Jet Set Willy

Software Projects (Spectrum)

The sequel to Manic Miner (see below), but a classic in its own right. Following a wild party, Manic Willy has to collect every dirty glass in his well-roomed mansion, avoiding its bizarre inhabitants - only then will his housekeeper Maria, let him go to bed. Married only by the fact that it's impossible to finish the game without cheating due to a couple of bugs.

● Manic Miner

BugByte (Spectrum)

The first great home computer platform game written by Matthew Smith. Twenty screens of platforms, collapsing walkways and wandering enemies to avoid, as you try to find the keys that will open the doorway to the next screen. Ah, happy memories.

● The Mario Series

Nintendo

You must have heard of Mario. The brave little builder (first appeared in the arcade game Donkey Kong and (despite a brief lapse in character as the buddy in Donkey Kong Jr.) has become a phenomenon on par with Mickey Mouse. Each game features lots of platforms, lots of bonuses, lots of hidden levels and lots and lots of fun.

PUZZLE GAMES

● Boulderdash

Fast Star/US Gold (C64)

A very simple concept - mine through boulders in search of diamonds, and avoid boulders falling from above. Later levels introduced marauding lifeforms to add to your troubles. Recently released on the Gameboy and still brilliant (see review in ACE Issue 40).

● Defektor

Gremly/Vortex (All formats)

Use mirrors, fibre-optic conduits and polarising and reflecting blocks to their optimum to bend a laser beam from the generator to a receiver. On offer are 60 levels of mind-bending puzzling.

● Pipemania

Empire International (All formats)

All action takes place on 10 x 7 grid. You have a certain amount of time before Flooz starts leaking from an outflow pipe. Using random pipe sections you have to make a tube for the Flooz to ooze down if it spills out then your game is over. Keep the Flooz flowing long enough and you gain access to the next, tougher, level. Reviewed in ACE Issue 31.

A READER WRITES...

Vincent Lawrence of Basingstoke obviously has a touch of psychic power because he's already sent in his all-time Top Ten. Here it is, along with comments by us...

1. *Racing Destruction Set* (Electronic Arts) - A very interesting choice.
2. *Elite* (Acornsoft) - We couldn't agree more.
3. *Stunt Car Racer* (Microstyle) - Great minds think alike...
4. *Firefly* (Special FX) - Hmm, great game, but not really groundbreaking.
5. *Alien 8* (Ultimate Play The Game) - Another excellent isometric-3D game from Ultimate, but *Knight Lore* was the first.
6. *Atic Atac* (Ultimate Play The Game) - The choice of the professionals!
7. *Kick Off* (Amco) - How could it not be here?
8. *Nemesis the Warlock* (Martech) - Really? Lots of ludicrous back 'n' stay, but little more.
9. *Millennium 2.2* (Activision) - A very competent space strategy game, but didn't exactly do anything fundamentally new to the genre as, say, *Panorama* did.
10. *Darkside* (Incentiva) - Good but the award goes to the trendsetter, *Drifter*.

Good choices, Vincent, and we overlap on four of them and almost do on two more (*Alien 8* and *Darkside*). Your choice of the *Racing Destruction Set* is very interesting and it's a game that's certainly worthy of consideration - we'll put it to the Board of Selectors when they meet! But what do the award goes to the trendsetter, *Drifter*.



PLATFORM-BASED GAMES - Jet Set Willy on the ZX Spectrum. Another Matthew Smith classic. Here Manic Willy has taken on the role of a flying pig level by Maria in the *Nightmare* Realm.

● Spirit Personalities

Domark (All formats)

Based on the slide puzzle idea. The computer pieces of someone's portrait fall onto a 3 x 5 grid. You had to sort them out to form the full picture. Occasional bombs also appeared which had to be moved off the screen before they exploded, losing you a life. See ACE Issue 39 for a full retrospective.

● Tetris

Academy/Salt/Mirrorsoft (All formats)

The first Russian-written game to hit the big time. Randomly-shaped blocks drop into a pit and as they fall you can rotate them. The aim is to make them slot together and form complete horizontal lines, whereupon they disappear. If the



RACING GAMES Street Car Race on the Amiga. Polygon-based graphics were vital to make the virtual zip-zoom scenes of this game.

blocks reach the top of the pit then the game ends. As success increases so does the speed at which the blocks drop... infuriatingly and endlessly addictive. See the be-cobwebbed review in ACE issue 5.

RACING GAMES

● 3D Death Chase

Microsigma (Spectrum)

Remember the Speeder Bikes from Return of the Jedi? Here you ride one, in a mad high-speed flight through a dense forest. There are no opponents (his main fault), it's just a case of staying alive long enough. Technically stunning for its time.

● Indianapolis 500

Electronic Arts (All formats)

All the action is viewed in polygon-generated 3D, which allowed for highly realistic modelling of the cars, track and surrounding detail. Multiple camera angle options let you watch the race from almost anywhere, even an overhead airship. Reviewed in ACE issue 29.

● Full Throttle

Microsigma (Spectrum)

Ah, the purity of the open road - just you, a bike... and 39 other riders. The best of the early 3D racing games. Action was fast, and coming

first was no mean feat, especially when one slight collision causes your speed to drop to zero, then just as you start to speed up, another bike rams into the back of you, dropping your speed to zero, then just as...

● Pitstop II

Epoch (CGA)

A highly enjoyable race-car game for one, but get a friend to join in and the fun more than doubles. Using a novel split screen effect (recently revived for Gremlin's Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge), both players could

participate at the same time.

● Shut Car Racer

Microstyle (All formats)

Race against a lone opponent on 8 different polygon-generated track types. However, these are no ordinary tracks: they rise and fall and, worst of all, are peppered with gaping pits that have to be jumped at the right speed. Wreck your buggy and you're out. Link two computers for head-to-head play. This roller-coaster ride of a game was reviewed in ACE issue 24.

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

● Bard's Tale 1, 2, 3

Interplay/Electronic Arts (All formats)

The original seek'n'slaughter RPG allows you to create and save parties of characters and then pit them through a series of encounters with monsters as you penetrate a complex multi-level maze. Graphics are represented in head-on Dungeon Master type style (though less sophisticated) and gameplay can be infernally massive challenge in BT2 and 3, though little development of gameplay techniques throughout the series. BT2 was reviewed in ACE issue 7.

● Dungeon Master

FTL/Mirrosoft (All formats)

Guide a party of four brave souls through 14 levels of monsters and mazes in the search for a magic staff to slay the evil Lord Chaos. Generated an

UK. Set in the mythical land of Britannia, Ultima V represented a quantum leap in graphic representation from previous episodes, with a vast, complex map and literally hundreds of characters to encounter. A tremendous game and well worth getting even if you've got Ultima VI. Reviewed in ACE issue 13.

● Ultima VI

Origin/Mindscape (All formats)

First Ultima game to depart from the traditional small-scale overhead map display and use a larger scale scrolling map throughout the game. You also get separate figures for every member of your party, who follow you around faithfully as you explore Britannia. Unparalleled graphic detail for a game of this size - and the size is awesome! Reviewed in ACE issue 33.



ROLE-PLAYING GAMES Ultima V was the 1988 PC. The latest in the ever-changing and improving Ultima series.

THE GREATEST GAMES

NEXT MONTH IN PART 2

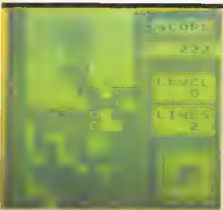
More controversy next month in Part 2 of the ACE Guide To The Greatest Games Of All Time, where the categories will be:

- **Original Games** - Those titles that you just can't pigeonhole!
- **Shoot-'Em-Up** - Which ones do we think give you the sweetest trigger finger?
- **Simulations** - The games that are more real than real life!
- **Sports Simulations** - Become a silicon Gazza with your computer!
- **Strategy Games** - Games so good they'd give Napoleon another reason to say "Not tonight, Josephine!"

...and the category without which no Guide would be complete...

- **Turkeys** - Those games you tried to forget, but couldn't!

Don't miss it! Order your copy of ACE now, out on 9th February 1991.



PUZZLE GAMES 3000 on the Commodore. A prime example of a static puzzle game. Graphics and sound are secondary to the computer's gameplay.

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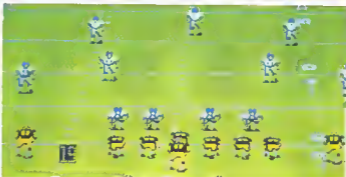
Twenty-eight, forty-four, twenty-eight, hut! ELECTRONIC ARTS goes for a Megadrive touchdown

Fire off the line, offence before the snap, call an audible... if you don't know what the hell I'm going on about then this game probably won't appeal to you. This would be a great shame as John Madden is the best American Football simulation to ever make a play on silicon.

You start the game by selecting the home/visitor team (16 teams plus the AI-Madden kick-butt team) and player (one or two human players plus console-controlled - alas Mr Madden himself), period length (five or fifteen minutes) and season mode (regular, sudden death or playoff). Snow, rain and mud weather conditions are possible in the playoffs. If you want to get straight down to it, you can by the default settings of playing San Francisco at home against the Madden-coached Denver team in a regular season game with five minute quarters. Phaw!

Next, you check-out the scouting reports with strength evaluations like 'great pass coverage and weakness highlights such as 'some holes in the secondary'. The visiting team then kicks off. During the game, your control pad changes into a multi-action controller whose function changes depending on the current state of play - if you're kicking, passing play defence before the snap, etc. The player currently in your control stands on a four arrow symbol for easy recognition.

Overall management of the game is as sweet as cherry pie. For example, when you're on offence the Play Calling Screen (which appears above the field along with the scoreboard) asks for a set, while the defence Play Calling Screen asks for a formation. A set is the nickname for the group of players who will run your play. There are six sets to choose from: each representing a different group of offensive geezers (literally). A formation such as goal line, Ier and near tells your player set how to line up before the snap. Once you've chosen a play, the only way to change it is by calling an audible or time-out.



Let's try that new play!

JOHN MADDEN AMERICAN FOOTBALL

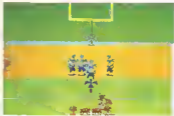
MEGADRIVE £35.99 **OUT NOW**

John Madden American Football comes complete with a comprehensive manual to explain all the intricacies of playing the game in full detail. If you want a taste of the 'real-thing' before you've got the hang of things, you can witness a brutal exhibition game between San Francisco and Denver. You should then be ready to go for your first touchdown. Who knows, if you're good enough you could end up providing commentary on a Channel Four American Football programme.

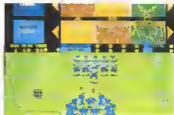
© Rik Hynes

KICKING OFF

John Madden American Football was developed by the Park Place Production Team in Oceanside, California. John Madden designed the game himself with help of Scott Orr and Richard Hillman. Jim Simmons was the programmer with graphics provided by Steve Quine, Art Alvia and Brian O'Hara. Rob Hubbard created the sounds and music. The North English Hubbard originally shot to fame with his excellent tunes on C64 games like the classic Crazy Comets, Commando, Thing on a Spring, Sanzou and Delta.



Will that kick be good enough?

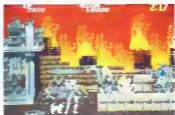


Here comes... boys, it's time to huddle!

SHADOW DANCER

One man and his dog go to mow a Megadrive

AD 1997, New York City. Having vanquished the evil crime empire, Neo Zeed, Shinobei was not heard from again. His combat ninja skills were not needed in a peaceful world. But a new threat arose in reptilian form that lived on vicious insect aliens. The colossal monster moved slowly and quietly, and its attack was relentless. The seals unfortunate enough to live became 'hostages'. Mass panic swept the streets.



Oh no! Ninja dog has become a helpless puppy

"It remained only for Shinobei to take action, the Ninja of the shadows. His weapons were stealth and quickness of attack. His only allies when facing over-whelming force. Relying on ninja weapons and magic, Shinobei fought on, assisted by his faithful dog. This is the story of their defiance."

Shadow Dancer, the Secret of Shinobei, is the latest Sega's coin-op to be converted over to the Megadrive. You control a nimble ninja on a hazardous multi-stage journey through the streets of the big apple. You're on a rescue mission to save the poor hostages from this mysterious criminal reptile. Along the way you meet masked wa-



Don't call my dog a mutt!



The buddy: Inaz at the end of level one

riots armed with knives and spears, pistol-toting security guards and long-haired bouncers armed with two deadly shields.

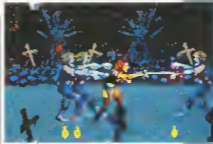
Shinobei can crouch, jump, attack with sword or shuken, and use a special Ninjutsu magic spell to wipe out who-ever's on-screen. If you keep the attack button pressed down, the ninja dog gets angry enough to charge and attack your nearest enemy. This tactic is particularly useful in dislodging your rivals from their secure hideouts. One nice touch is that your dog doesn't die from weapon-inflicted wounds, it just shrieks down to a harmless puppy.

MEGADRIVE

778

MEGADRIVE

MEGADRIVE £39.99 **OUT NOW**



Megadrive's Secret of Sodaia

Special thanks to PC Engine Supplier (0782 722759) for supplying the cart

After killing everything on screen apart from the hostages, you get a quick burst of a silly bonus game and a crack at an end-of-level boss menchie. I've just one question to ask the developers of these scrolling beat-'em-up arcade games - why are they all set in 1997 New York? Perhaps these are a tribute to John Carpenter's cult movie, Escape from New York

By Rick Hayes



Megadrive Battle Squadron

INNERPRISE INITIATIVE

Innerprise Initiative: Two conversions from the British software company Innerprise onto the Sega Megadrive

Sword of Sodaia is a heck-a-tough game with distinctively large sprites. You play Shadow or Ironan, slaying wards of the legendary warrior Sodaia. It is a quest to wrest the evil from Kingdoms from the grip of the evil wizard Zana. Your path is lined with traps, blocked by towering warriors and steaming with lava. Magic potions can be found to give you extra lives, flaming swords, shields and other mystical powers. Seven different levels provide the differing challenges, ranging from the Bridge of Spikes to the Zombie Graveyard. "Sword of Sodaia features realistic hand-to-hand combat and textures of pushing blood," says EA.

Menchie, if you prefer a shoot-'em-up, look no further than Battle Squadron. "This conversion of the smash hit Amiga game features two-player simultaneous team play, arcade style graphics and a wide variety of enemies ranging from mysterious chameleon ships to mutant Cybernaks and fierce Nitroguns," EA offers.

Your mission - should you accept it - is to wipe out the Barrax ground and air forces based on the planet Terraxa and rescue fellow flight commanders, Bargin and Meyers. Weapons can be upgraded or changed when you capture imprisoned marines from destroyed Barraxian gunships. You can also use Nova smart bombs to clear any tanks, planes, bombs and surface gunners in your way. Rick Hayes has done the Megadrive/mega conversion.

Battle Squadron and Sword of Sodaia have just been released on the Megadrive at £39.99 each. Look out for full reviews in the next issue of ACE.

R DAYS OF THUNDER

Who needs Tom Cruise when you're around? *Days of Thunder* is based around last summer's movie, a kind of Top Gun with stock cars. You take the role of rookie driver Cole Trickle in a race to win the prestigious Daytona event in Florida.

The game is played in an eight-race series cup, with you up against 15 other drivers including the more skillful talents of Rowdy Burns and Russ Wheeler (two of the characters from the original film). The races take place at seven different tracks - you even get the chance to have a go at Daytona Beach in a pre-run to the final race.

Each track varies in length and shape with a preceding four-lap qualifying run to determine your starting position. These braking, turning tasks give the feeling of racing around a fair ground's wall of death - which frequently they are if you're not doing that well, your sponsor could even ask you to run a lime trial - fail this test and you can kiss that sponsor money goodbye.

Fortunately you don't have to come first in every race to win. The driver who has most points at the end of the eight-race series wins the cup. For instance, you get bonus points if you lead in any lap. The racing season visits tracks around America, from Phoenix to Atlanta.

You see a slightly overhead view of the track - and behind your own car - during the racing. Instrument panels situated around the track keep you updated on your car's fuel, speedometer, tachometer and damage status. You also get additional lap information. The tachometer indicates how hard your engine is working. Your car is capable of speeds up to



Tom Cruise and Robert Duvall fight a war of nerves in the *Days of Thunder* movie - at least they didn't have to play the game! *Days of Thunder* © 1990 Paramount

200 miles per hour in a long straight-way, though you can't handle curves at this speed. You must make sure you level of damage is kept under control as tire wear and engine damage can dramatically affect your speed. If you blow the tires you'll only be able to coast into the pits and a completely shot engine will put you out of the race.

TASTY NASCAR TACTICS

Side-slamming: cutting off other cars and bumping them aside are legitimate tactics in the game. Just mind you don't crash or cause too much wear and tear on your own car. **The Pipe-line:** Curve up the bank and plunge down into the inside of the track to give yourself a gravitational boost of speed... while avoiding other drivers doing exactly the same manoeuvre.

Eye-brooming: Save fuel by drifting close behind a fast moving opponent, you'll be dragged along in its wake. You even get some extra acceleration power when you move out of this slipstream. Races have been won or lost because of this tactic.

You saw the movie, you heard the soundtrack, now play the NES game from MINDSCAPE...



Start of the race and guess where our hero is?

This where pit stops become essential, though you don't want to make that many of them during a race. During a pit stop you can change one to four tires, perform engine repairs and refuel - but each second spent in the pit costs you a precious second on the track.

If leave the final words to actor and would-be race driver Tom Cruise: "racing isn't that different from acting. It challenges you physically and mentally. You can't go in and put your foot to the floor and expect to win. You have to think it out."

● Rik Meynes

PIC

5
0

week month

Don't start your own hoodlum club just as long as it plays well who comes what the weather is like. Ah, it does. It's one of all the things you need you'll never look for in all, but ultimately it's the small for you, my car!

678

NES

Oh dear there's a lot of disappointment. Playing games is difficult to do on the right TV or a hard. The game is played on NES because the only way to ensure that the car and driver names often in other games. And also that you can't when you're playing a game. The developer graphics and sound at the end of the game are led down by the star game in the NES. The NES is the only way to get the best in the NES for the NES. The NES is the only way to get the best in the NES for the NES. The NES is the only way to get the best in the NES for the NES.

NES CIBA SPRING '91



Don't drive on the left as you're trying to look a bit edgy.



MARIO 4

Mario hoters will be digging their own groves soon...Rik Haynes checks out the awful truths behind the forthcoming release of Mario 4...

OK, who wears dantigames, stars in his own TV cartoon series and makes 200 million dollars a year? Yup...you guessed right.

Mario is now officially more popular than Mickey Mouse, Mario's "Q" rating, which measures a celebrity's popularity among American children and adults, ranks him ahead of Walt Disney's endearing rodent. In five short years, Mario has rapidly transcended video game hero status to become a cultural phenomenon in both North America and Japan.

Mario began his rise to fame with his initial appearance in the classic coin-op, *Donkey Kong*. However it was Nintendo, the giant Japanese console manufacturer, that turned this cute character into an international cultural icon.

Super Mario Bros. on the Nintendo Entertainment System has sold more than 18.5 million copies since its introduction in 1985. The game is a simple but highly addictive arcade platform adventure. *Super Mario Bros. 2* followed as a top-selling sequel to the original game, and, nearly a year ago, the third *Super*

Mario Bros. games cartridge was released. *Super Mario Bros. 3* was Nintendo's first three-megabit cartridge, giving its developers the spare memory for additional gameplay scenarios. It is believed Nintendo, the world's No. 1 games company, sold over 7.5 million copies of *Super Mario Bros. 3* by the end of 1990. No wonder Nintendo makes almost as much profit as the most widely-known Japanese corporation, Sony.

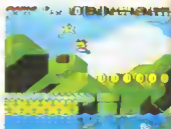
Now the crafty company from Kyoto in Japan has released *Super Mario World* (*Super Mario Bros. 4*) onto its new Super Famicom 16-bit console hoping dedicated Mario fans will flock to the shops buying both the game cartridge and console. Not a bad move, eh?

The Mario craze doesn't end with the release of the fourth game either. The huge appeal of Mario has allowed him to go far beyond the world of video games, entering movies, television, books, magazines and an enormously varied range of merchandise. More than 300 licensed products display Mario's likeness representing some \$200 million in annual retail sales in the USA. Items ranging from Mario sleeping bags to cake decorations are available at more than 6000 World of Nintendo retail outlets throughout North America.

The *Super Mario Bros. Super Show* is a syndicated comedy adventure series airing on 135 television stations across America, and *Super Mario Bros. 3* is a fully-animated TV programme based on the blockbuster game which features the weekly adventures of Mario and Luigi. Plus, there's *Captain N - The Game Master* cartoon series based around other popular Nintendo video game characters. These three shows form a one hour block of Nintendo television programmes on NBC Saturday Mornings in the States. Inside's even suggest that Hollywood actor Dustin Hoffman owns the movie rights to the *Super Mario Bros.* games!

Since its launch in 1985, *Super Mario Bros.* and its sequels have sold more than 20 million copies in America alone. "Mario's popularity transcends age and gender," says Peter Main, part of Nintendo's marketing engine in the States. "Mario may not be the fastest or strongest, but his character embodies a certain kind of spirit which appeals to the underdog in all of us," adds Main. A review of *Super Mario World* on the Super Famicom will appear in the next issue, and everybody on ACE has had a chance to play the game properly.

• Rik Haynes



Slippery: Mario's rise to the glory peaked the success of Nintendo's *Super Mario* games. He has been the program of all five games, in charge of the level programming and design teams in the Japanese games industry. With the unexpected water of the bottom of the screen, one of the most vivid titles authored by the Super Nintendo's advanced hardware.



Don't forget your Nintendo! Many of the *Super Mario Bros. 3* development team also worked on the Super Nintendo version of *Mario Star City*.



Mario's main attack: He'll fly up into the air and out of trouble in *Super Mario Bros. 4* you can earn your game allowing you to rescue a game you've played before.



I wish I could see your progress through the World of *Super Mario*. Many thanks to our friends at ABC Corporation in Japan for the pics.

PLAY THESE SPECS!

Here are the SUPER FAMICOM specs. This is what you'll be playing *Mario 4* on...

CPU: Similar to the 65C816 but modified especially for the Super Famicom. It works as fast as a 23-MHz processor.

PROCESSOR: IPIG: 1.7MHz (clocking 10 pins), 2.8MHz (borrowing from ROM), 3.5MHz (borrowing from RAM).

MAIN MEMORY: 1MB.

SCREEN: 64x448 with 256 colors on-screen out of a palette of 32768.

SOUND: 8 channels of 16-bit digital audio at 44KHz.



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 Which computer(s) do you own?



The Chestnut Room. Each square on the board has a special property (some make useful third parties). Anyone remember the Adversary Game?



The Storm of Shadows is where Abel begins his adventure. If ever there was good reason to be afraid of your own shadows, this is it.

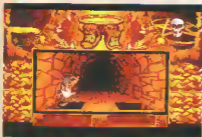
Go to Hell!

Super-cute characters, breathtaking animation and amazing puzzles. Jim Douglas finds Hell isn't so bad after all.





Adventure
Game?



The Lizbeths sink the rooms in the tests, and must be negotiated quickly but carefully.

HOW IT WORKS

Programmers Jerr O'Connell (Artist) and Jed Keaveney (Coder) have put the game together using an Amiga 3000. Virtually everything seen on screen is a paint animation file. The only code which will be resident in the game during play is a driver program pulling the illustrations off the CD as required and handling game logic.

CD OR NOT CD

Basically, non-CD versions of Lito! Div! will feature cut-down graphics and music. At present, the programmers are unsure what elements of the game itself will have to be sacrificed. The up-side of this, of course is that CD owners will finally have a game finally written specifically for their machine, rather than a jammed up version of an existing product.

FORMATS: AMIGA, AMIGA CD, ST, PC, PC CD, CONSOLE CD

RELEASE DATE: AUTUMN 91

PRICE: UNDECIDED

Gremlin's *Lito! Div!* has been under development for nearly a year now, and to say the company has been keeping its existence under its hat would be an understatement. Indeed, the game isn't even slated to see the light of day until late next year. So, if it's only half-finished, why does everything look so good?

The storyline centres on Mul and his adventures through Hell. Mul's goal is to thoroughly explore Hell, solving puzzles along the way and in doing so, prove to God that he's a nice enough chap really and should be allowed back into heaven.

Hell is broken down into an infernal sea of hissing corridors (displayed in perspective 3D) with rooms leading off. Gameplay, therefore, is broken into two stages. As Mul runs along the tunnels, he will face arcade-style problems such as collapsing floor tiles, deadly spikes etc. Magic spells and useful items can also be found in the tunnels. Once in the rooms, though, Mul encounters more puzzle-orientated problems.

Owners of the Dragon's Lair games will no doubt eye the screenshots with suspicion, worrying they've seen this style of graphic-lead game before, and found it sadly lacking in playability. It's important to point out, then, that no resident memory is expended on the pictures. Gremlina are very aware that they must deliver equally on both counts.

Look forward to a full playtest and review in a future issue, but in the mean time, we'll let the pictures do the talking.



Our hero! Mul's avatars plus his own greater personality.



Items, the full life in pieces.

Firstly, drawing style. To do more in fewer bytes we regular readers are assuming your desktop or C.A.

To do more in fewer bytes we regular readers are assuming your desktop or C.A. some kind of graphics leading to graphics in video games. That's about all I know about it. It's about 3D. That's about all I know about it. It's about 3D. That's about all I know about it.



And this to find out the existence of an amiable college teacher.



BETRAYAL



A WEB OF INTRICATE POSSIBILITIES - BUT FAIR PLAY ISN'T
ONE OF THEM

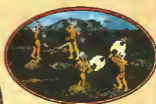
MASTERS OF STRATEGY

A WEB OF INTRICATE POSSIBILITIES - BUT FAIR PLAY
ISN'T ONE OF THEM

BETRAYAL



The Wild Marches is a corrupt land ruled by animal leaders. You are one of four Knights with a lust for power. And in the pursuit of power, the end justifies the means.



The Riverland battles yield the greatest spoils. Strategically extend your domain, reduce your rivals' resources, and tighten your stranglehold on the peasants of the land.



The towns provide your power base. Manage them successfully and harvest the wealth needed to buy, bribe and fight for ultimate power.

Betrayal involves a long, hard, ruthless struggle, starting with the economic management of your towns and cultivation of your lands, culminating in the honing of your military strategy and execution of political subterfuge.



Develop a mastery of political subterfuge, gaining places for your Courtiers at the palaces of the Xing and Shohop, ready for the coup which will make you the master of Betrayal.

BETRAYAL A HELL OF A GOD GAME

A new barrel of fine Welsh ale had just been breached. The royal palace's smoky dining hall resounded to cheery voices. To one side of the top table a harpist and a minstrel were struggling to be heard above the commotion caused by two dogs snarling over a bone in a corner.

Eating slowly, I leant forward to catch the breathless whisper of a rival knight.

"They came in at a run, baying like wolves. Four wild-eyed barbarians ready to cut, gouge, pulvise and kill anything that moved."

That news was indeed music to my ears. My forces' attack on his wealthiest town had met with success. Financially weakened, militarily broken, and politically bankrupt, he could no longer hold influence at Court.

So long as no evidence of my wrong doing remained. So long as the Gods blessed the crops of my harvest. So long as the rumours of the capture of my brother were true. The throne was mine.

I've cheated, lied, spied and slaughtered. The fruits of Betrayal are mine.



From the programmers of Silkworm, the shoot 'em up of the eighties, comes SWIV, the shoot 'em up of the nineties.



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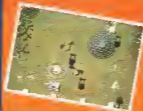
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UNIQUE
DYNAMIC
LOADER
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Computer aided weapons systems on-line communications equipment operational. System complete, prepare for combat as a member of your native assault team - SWIV. Two different vehicles of devastating destructive power, fighting together none the less.

PRIMARY Objective: Destroy enemy control

SECONDARY Objective: Interdiction mission. The destruction by satellite forces of all enemy units.

SWIV - No one knows what it means but everyone will know it when it arrives. Coming soon.

"Destined to be THE Shoot 'Em Up of the year." Amiga Computing November, '90
"Superdative shoot 'Em Up Stunner." Zero November, '90

© 1990 Silkstorm. All rights reserved. Artwork from the Amiga version.

Two extra missions disks and a host of recent conversions. This month's updates are brought to you on the PC, ST and Amiga.

UPDATES

PC



Lost Patrol on the IBM PC

LOST PATROL
Ocean £24.99; Amiga version reviewed issue 30; ACE rating deferred

Lost Patrol was extensively previewed in issue 30, but since it was unfinished no rating was awarded.

The game is a Vietnam War graphic adventure with arcade sequences. You have to command a platoon of stranded American GIs, making their way through VC-occupied territory on their way back to base.

The PC version, on three 3.5 inch disks, has some excellent semi-animated VGA graphics, combining map screens with icon-driven command functions, atmospheric pictures of the grunts slogging their way through the jungles



Interphase on the IBM PC

and paddy fields and the Vietnamese they encounter, and various status screens and explanatory diagrams of the equipment and they use.

The let-down is the arcade sequences, where the GIs encounter VC snipers, machine-gun nests and so on. Poorly-drawn and offering little challenge, they detract from the strategy elements rather than adding any arcade excitement. Sound is basic, with no add-on sound cards supported.

PC RATING: 630

INTERPHASE
Imaga Works £24.99; Atari ST/Amiga version reviewed issue 27; ACE rating 915

This very impressive 3-D vector graphic arcade adventure has converted well to the PC. The action takes place inside the memory of a computer security system, with different sections manifesting themselves as colourful, smoothly-animated geometrical shapes, tunnels and open spaces which you can explore freely. There are also 2-D building blueprints to examine in magnified form, scanners to monitor, messages to decode, puzzles to solve and defences to avoid.

Graphics are very colourful, smoothly-animated and fast moving - if anything better animated than those of the Amiga and ST. The PC version comes on a single 3.5 or 5.25 inch disk, and supports all colour graphics modes. It also supports the AdLib sound board.

A top-class conversion of a classic 3-D arcade adventure.

PC RATING: 910

ATF II
Digital Integration £24.99; Atari ST/Amiga version reviewed issue 40; ACE rating 580/690

ATF (Advanced Tactical Fighter) II is half-way between being a flight simulator and an arcade game, it has more briefing, set-up and option screens than you would expect of a shoot-'em-up, but less detail than you would expect from a true simulation. In that sense it falls between two stools and may satisfy neither arcade or simula-

tion fans. The PC version has most of the features of the Amiga and ST versions; colourful graphics and control panels, and fast-scrolling checkerboard backgrounds with the minimum of animation and background detail.

VGA graphics are comparable in colour and style to those of the Amiga, while CGA and Tandy four-colour are no more than adequate. Sound is basic, and add-on sound cards are not supported. The manual doesn't properly explain all the PC keyboard controls, and the mouse functions don't always seem to work, which is no help. Not the best amicable PC conversion, inheriting the basic faults of the other ver-

PC RATING: 610





Dragon Breed on the Amiga

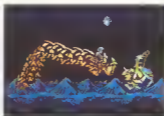


AMIGA

DRAGON BREEO

Activision £24.99; AtariST Version reviewed Issue 40; ACE rating 7/20

Like the ST version, the Amiga version of Irem's swords-and-sorcery version of R-Type is horrifically difficult, which can be a good or bad point depending on your inclination. Gameplay is noticeably smoother, piloting your fire-breathing dragon through the skies you wipe out endless demons with the help of your cross-bow, dragonbreath and other magical weapons. On the Amiga version it's definitely



easier to get the dragon's tail into its mouth.

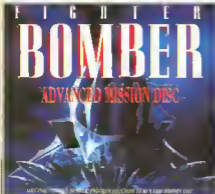
The other differences in the Amiga version are slightly improved sound, although the strange roaring coming from destroyed demons rapidly becomes irritating; and an unfortunate pause for disk access before each end-of-level demon appears.

Scrolling and sprite movement are fine, but not much has been done to take full advantage of the Amiga's superior graphics.

AMIGA RATING: 7/40

EXTRA DISKS EXTRA!

This month the postman's bulging sack yielded two extra missions disks for rather good games and so, in the spirit of the flexible magazine ACE endeavours to be, here's Extras Update.



FIGHTER BOMBER

Advanced Missions Disk £29.99; ST Activision

Fighter Bomber's advanced missions disks offers a storming 16 new missions to undertake. On top of this, some efforts have gone into enhancing the graphics from the original game, with the addition of extra landmarks like radar towers and trucks to liven up the landscape. Loading is relatively simple with the programmers, Vektor Graphics managing to pack

all the missions onto one disk.

There's even a mission design option allowing you to create your own landscapes with specific targets to either spot or destroy. It has to be said, though that at almost £30, you should be sure that you're thoroughly addicted to Fighter Bomber's concept before purchase.

ACE RATING 8/20

DAMOCLES MISSIONS DISK

Novagen £9.99

Owners of the highly acclaimed Damocles now have five extra missions to explore thanks to original author Paul Woakes. The missions offer a variety of game styles from frantic races against the clock through an adventure featuring another mercenary who's always one step ahead to a paranoid nightmare where, just when you thought you'd completed the game, you find the rug comprehensively pulled from under your feet.

On loading, a breakdown of each mission appears along with a step-by-step explanation and even a solution if you want it. From within the main game each mission is loaded through

the Save Game option.

Rather than simple being more of the same, the variety of pace in the missions means that you can play whichever style of game you want. Mission 1 is a ten-minute dash.

Familiarity with Damocles obviously means that you're more at home with the controls, but beginners, when presented with both the game and the extra missions should experience little difficulty getting started.

ACE RATING: 8/20



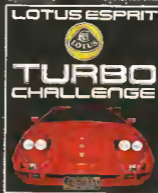
Damocles Missions Disk on the Amiga

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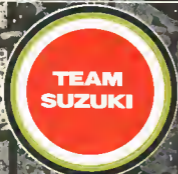
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Drakken

Adam Morely continues from the end of level 3...

Level 4

This stage requires you to enter the frozen wastes of the north, and travel to Prince Nakhkhen's Ice Palace. (If you have not entered the dungeon area in stage three you will be unable to enter this palace.) When you reach the palace go straight in. You will find that it too has been attacked and that only one servant remains. He tells you to make your way to Princess Nakhkha's palace in the west.

Level 5

The best way to reach this palace is to follow the road westward from Prince Nakhkhen's palace. Go over the cross-road and keep heading directly west. After quite a while you'll reach Nakhkhen's palace. Go over the cross road and keep heading directly west. After quite a while you'll reach Nakhkha's little den of iniquity.

Enter the palace and operate the symbol to the right of the doorway. Send your warrior through the opening and wait until he or she has defeated the Drakh knight. Then send the other characters through. From here you should unlock the doors with a spell and go right, into the armory. Equip your characters, if necessary and then send your warrior and scout into the room below, followed by your protected magic users. (Spell 7).

After defeating the enemies here, enter the next room along with your scout - invisible if possible - ignore the Drakh Lord there and enter the room below this one. You'll probably find another Drakh Lord here. Ignore him too. Cast an unlock spell or use a key on the door in the left hand wall and then return to the others. Then take your warrior and sorcerer, make them invisible (spell 3) and lead them both past the Drakh Lords until you reach the door your scout opened last. Send the warrior through and renege combat mode. Then you need to follow the palace map until you reach the red room right at the bottom. Here you will find Princess Hordkhen. Make sure you aren't on attack mode when you enter this room.

Once you've freed her it's time to leave. Retrace your steps, join up with your scout and priest and then leave.

Level 6

When you leave, head south until you reach the marshy zone, then follow the map until you come to Princess Haagkha's pagoda style palace. Enter and then quickly operate the symbol to the right of the doorway to shut off the force-field. Go through into the next room and then send one of your characters, preferably your warrior, into the room ahead.

Follow the palace map until you reach the hall before the red room. Switch off your combat mode and make sure that you have room for another item in your item's list. Even if it means that you must rid yourself of an important piece of equipment, then enter.

Inside you'll find Princess Haagkha. If your question has she will give you a list of instructions and a special weapon (+2 Drags). Once you have the weapon you should leave, return to the

Tricks 'n' Tactics

Welcome, game fiends, to another T'n'T. Over the page, you'll find an in-depth analysis of last month's topper, Prince of Persia, a further burst of Xenomorph information and a batch of mini-tips to help get you started on a host of games. But now...

others and then leave the palace.

You may, however, wish to hold off another powerful weapon and some armour. To do this you should send one or two of your characters to the bottom room of the palace map. In the room before the dragon you will find four mechanisms; set them to the numbers shown by using the operate and examine commands and then enter the dragon's lair. Be careful not to get incinerated and go through the door in the botto-

of the room. You will now be inside a dank cave containing another Drags, a suit of armour, a ring and a Vest!

Level 7

Follow the map until you are back at Prince Hordkhen's palace again, enter it and make your way towards his chamber. Make sure your warrior is using the special Drags weapon and make him or her invisible. Then send them into the Princess chamber and kill her.

Using this new weapon should make things relatively easy. If you fall through, simply reload from your saved position before entering the palace and have another go.

Level 8

When Hordkhen is no longer in the land of the living, leave his palace and go back to Haagkha's little mansion. Send your warrior to see her again and she will congratulate you and give you the next part of your mission.

No more this month. You'll have to fend for your selves for another 28 days, Drakkers.



Shadow of the Beast 2

Now, from where we we left off last time, Daniel Vernon picks up the story...

You should now be in jail. Offer the guard the drink. Now break out and kill the guard. Collect the key he drops. Climb up the light and jump off at the first ledge on the left. Use the key to release the prisoner. Walk right back onto the chain. Climb on the top and jump left. Now kill the guards and pick up the ring. Run right and jump to where the prisoner is trying to escape. Use the key and then run to the right. Go out on the steps where you came in.

Go right until you reach a bridge. He should fall through it. Now run right and offer the ring to the old man. Then give him the parchment. Collect the weapon and walk left. Fall down the hole into the river. After you have been through the whirlpool run right. Drop down, run right. Get onto the rope and jump onto the other side. Collect the horn. Jump back onto the rope and climb down.

Go right to the snail and ask about Karamoon. Answer Yes to both his questions. Now run right and kill the two creatures. Keep on going right, drop off the ledge and go right past the creature coming out of the tree stump. Use the horn, climb onto the creature's back and you'll travel to the other side of the water. Now run right into a castle, down some steps and keep going until you find Zekel. Kill him with the new weapon and you'll have completed the game. Well done!

Prince of Persia Special!



Picture 3

For all you Princes stuck in the Sultan's dungeons, we've worked long and hard and cracked the game. So here's a step by step guide to the first four slashin' levels.



Picture 4

level 2

level I

Walk right, fall down and then walk right. Don't fall with the slab, but instead hang onto the ledge and lower yourself down. Exit on the left. Run to the left, jump the chasm and land on the slightly elevated slab. This will open the portcullis. Exit through the portcullis. Run left drop from the ledge and run right, treading on the elevated slab. Jump left over the chasm. Be careful of the falling slab. Exit through the portcullis.

Run left over the falling slabs, drop down and exit left. Tread on the elevated slab to open the portcullis. Take a run up and use the falling slab over the chasm to jump over the portcullis closing slab. (See picture 1) Exit left. Jump the chasm, stand on the falling slab and fall down. Exit left. Drop down and pick up the sword. Exit right.

Retrace your steps back to the second screen (where you landed after lowering yourself down). Exit right. Fight the swordsmen (See swordfighting tips) Exit right. Hang from the ledge to open the door. Exit through the door. (See picture 2)



Picture 1



Picture 2

Exit left carefully. Run left and fight swordsmen (See picture 3) Exit left. Run left until you reach the falling slab. Take the potion if you need it, tapoe through the spikes and exit left. (See picture 4) Climb onto the second level, then take a running jump at the chasm. Tapoe to the edge of the ledge and turn left. Jump up and exit top. Climb up and exit left. Fight swordsmen and tread on elevated slab. Exit through open portcullis.

Run left. Jump over portcullis-closing slab and exit left. Walk left and drop down. Fight swordsmen. Exit left. Run left through open portcullis. Don't drink grey potion. Climb ledge and exit left. Leap over chasm and fight swordsmen.

Exit left. Run and exit left. Run left but slow down to get through the spikes. Jump over the chasm and exit top. Run around and jump back. Exit right. Climb onto the ledge, fight the swordsmen and exit left. Run past the door and exit left. Jump over the chasm and land on the elevated slab to open the door. Jump back over the chasm and exit right. Exit through the door. (See picture 5)



Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 11

level 4

Walk right, tread on the elevated panel, turn around and exit left through the portcullis. Walk left, drop down, land on the elevated panel.

(opens portcullis) climb up and exit left. Step on the elevated panel jump over the inset panel and exit left through the portcullis. Walk left, causing both slabs to fall and climb up through open portcullis.

Exit left. Run through the teeth and drink the potion and exit right. Jump over holes and exit (carefully) right. Run and exit right. Walk right and climb down. Walk right and exit. Walk right, drop down and drink the potion if you need it. Climb up and exit right. Walk right, drop down, climb up on the right, walk through the teeth and fight the swordsman (See picture 11).

Exit right. Walk right and climb up. Exit top. Climb up and jump right over chasm. Exit right.

Run right and walk through the spikes and exit right. Fight the swordsman and exit right. Walk right, go and collect the potion if you need it.

Exit right. Walk right, climb up and exit right. Walk right, climb down, walk through the teeth, exit left. Step on the elevated platform and exit right. Walk back through the teeth. Climb up and exit left. Run left and jump through the mirror (See picture 12). Run left, jump over the hole and exit left. Exit through the door. (See picture 13).

Congratulations! You have now completed four levels of The Prince.

PITS AND CHASMS

When you find yourself dropping down a pit, hold down the fire button and try to cling onto a passing ledge. In later levels, this sort of business is absolutely necessary.

level 3

Exit right. Climb up twice, turn around and jump over to the right. Walk to the right ledge, turn around and climb up. Exit top.

Climb up twice, turn around and jump off the screen to the right. (See picture 6) Walk to the ledge and jump across the chasm. Jump across the second chasm, opening a portcullis off screen. Turn around and jump back across both chasms. (See picture 7) **START RUNNING!** Jump off the left of the screen. Run and exit left.

Run left and jump chasm. Continue to run left. Run left, jump over the chasm and grab onto the ledge at the other side. Put yourself up and exit left. (See picture 8) Drink potion if you need it. Exit left. Run left and drop down. Climb up (opening the portcullis) and exit left. Run left, stop before the chopping blades and run through them. Drop down twice and exit bottom.

Run right, tread on the panel opening the door. Turn around and run back left. Climb up and exit top. Climb up again, and go through the blades. Exit right. Walk to the edge of the ledge, turn around and lower yourself down. Walk right, fight the skeleton and gradually (See picture 9) work him right off the edge. Climb down and exit bottom. Fight the skeleton again, working him further left. If he falls through the floor. Exit left. Exit through the door. (See picture 10).



Picture 7



Picture 8

SPIKES 'N' TEETH

Spikes are found generally at the bottom of pits. If you fall down a pit towards some spikes, you're dead. If these are spikes on the floor, however, walking through them at normal speed will not kill you. Invincibility during the teeth is simply a matter of timing.



Picture 3



Picture 10



Picture 12



Picture 13

SWORDSMEN

In general the swordsmen don't offer a particularly stiff challenge. They tend instead to catch you in tricky positions, forcing you backwards off ledges and onto spikes, etc. The only really tough swordsman is found at the end of level 6. The best policy to adopt is one of caution. Wait for the guard to make his move and then strike. After a successful hit, advance and strike again immediately. Don't stand around swinging your sabre unnecessarily.



Operation Stealth

From where we left off last time:

The Final Stretch

You will now be in a mens' toilet. Operate soldier. Take army boots, examine the boots & you will find faces. Use the faces on the soldier. Take the napkin. Use the ushkin on soldier. Take clothes. Examine sink and take the glass. Exit the room, go left and down, enter the room in the center. Operate all drawers and examine them. You will find a blank stamp and some more faces.

Use faces on John. Exit room, go right. Now enter the room in the middle. Examine clothes. Take mission instructions. Use glass on fountain, operate the garbage dump. You'll now find a toiletball. Exit room, go right and up. You will now be asked to fetch a glass of water. Go up the screen and left until you come to the room in which you tied up the soldier. Enter the room on the right.

When you get into this room, there will be an officer. If you look carefully you will see a stamp on his desk. Stand next to it. Use the glass on officer. When his back is turned, take the stamp on his desk and exit the room. Now go to the room where you found the toiletball & mission instructions. Now examine around the armchair until you find an inkpad.

Use stamp on inkpad. Now use inkpad on mission instructions. Operate cigarette case. Now examine all cigarettes in the case. Now operate the blue one. You will be just left with the paper. Now use cig paper on glass. You will now get a fingerprint. Now exit the room and go up to the point where you were asked to fetch a glass of water. Use fingerprint in fingerprint ID. The door will open when you walk in front of it.

Now go right through the door. On the next screen use the authorized mission on the mailbox. The electric barrier will now go. Go through the door. Go through the door. Go to the trashcan. Use the electric cable on the electric sock etc. Operate the razor.

Use the razor on the trashcan. At this point examine the cigarette s and make sure you know which one is the red one. Go through the door.

Prepare yourselves for the final installment next time.



Xenomorph

Level 12

This is the last ducts section that you'll come across. That is why the aliens are so sad. uh! Get the rocket launcher. Don't use it yet, as you need all its firepower on the next level's sniper alien. Go to L and go up.

Level 11

The aliens here are amusing. On your scanner you see lots of them. On screen, nothing is visible. Wait in a trap and kill them when they come. Find the tank (14). Use all RL bullets and then your lasers, and then pick up the disks which the space tank guarded.

You're now on your way home.

Level 12

Go up with Q.

Level 10

Go up using O.

Level 9

Recharge your weapons. Get your cards. Find the

Console Corner

Over the last month we've been inundated with tips and cheats for console systems and so, we proudly tug back the velvet curtains, tap our gavel, ring our bell and comb our hair in order to declare Console Corner well and truly, "open"!

NINTENDO GAMEBOY

Castlevania Adventure

Level 1:

Collect a powered-up whip. Now shoot the torch with the fireball and the one-up will fall to the ground.

Level 2:

Run and jump across all three moving platforms, while resetting the lempatobou of using your whip while you're in the air.

Level 3:

Wait for the ceiling to fall then hit the tower four times, make sure the last hit is very late.

antimatter and take the antimatter. Go up using N.

Level 8

Go up using M. Don't forget your chips.

Level 7

Go up with L.

Level 5

Get a piece of antimatter and go up using I.

Level 3

Get a piece of antimatter and go up using G.

Level 2

If there is an alien left, try your large lasers with setting three.

Level 1

You're back. Get rid of the antimatter. Put all the chips on their respective cards. Insert the cards in the right places. Insert the OS and Nav disks in your computer. Press the button and wait for the end sequence.

Congratulations!

Thanks to Hans Goyt from Holland for these tips.

Quickly run back to the lorch, jump and whip it to collect the one-up.

Thanks to Mizanur Rahman of North Humberdale for these tips.

SEGA MEGADRIVE

Space Harrier 2

On the title screen, press AB & C to access the music selection. The pieces of music correspond to the levels.

Golden Axe

On the character select screen, hold down but on B and pull down and left together to reveal round select.

Thunderforce

For option mode, press A and START together on the title screen.

Super Shinobi

On the waterfall stage, where the logs fall horizontally, move to the end of the ledge, jump and somersault and fire so the knives go downwards. If you hear a "crack" sound, jump on a log and jump back onto the ledge.

Batman

When you reach the first extra life symbol, jump across and get it. Go up to the top half of the moving platforms and lo back down. Another life has appeared. This can be repeated up to nine times and it's worth noting that this can be done in other parts of the game with butterflies etc.

Phelios

If completing the game in advance mode, don't turn the machine off. Restart the game and you can now play in expert mode.

Thanks to James Dobson for these



Poseidon Planet Eleven

For you C64 owners currently floundering in Poseidon, Ian Thomson from Scotland offers this rather excellent map.

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

Thunderblade II

When you get the game over message, press button 2, down & right at the same time to get two continue options.

Space Harrier

To enter the sound test, press right, left, down, right. When the game over message appears on the screen, press up, up, down, down left, right, left, right, down up down up. Don't touch either button 1 or 2 as on the last up you will start where you died with eight continue options.



Wonderboy II

To get out of the labyrinth use these directions at the intersections: DDR LDR DRU UULU LDR DRDDDL.

Galaxy Force

Do the planets in this order: Green, White, Blue and Red.

Captain Silver

To continue when the words Game Over are on the screen press Up, Left and then both but tons.

Choplifter

When you die, press the buttons very fast and you should have collected all the hostages.

Afterburner

Turn on and press pause exactly 100 times. The demo won't start and when you die you can continue up to stage seventeen.

Thanks to Jody Goodall for these tips



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Rats!

Suspense. Not knowing what will happen next. Or even when it will happen. Fear of making your next decision. Terror that it will be you last if you get it wrong.

Unfortunately engendering those emotions has evaded all but the most original software authors. Too often the computer gamer player is presented with the whole picture. There are no dark corners in which monsters may dwell.

The Rats was a notable exception. A lone venture into computing by book publisher Hodder and Sloughlin, this 1985 release combined strategy and adventure to capture the mood of James Herbert's gory horror classic.

RAT UP A DRAINPIPE

The cinematic, animated title sequence established the sense of foreboding. A scintillating rat's eyes were caught in the beam of a torch, setting the scene for the horrors to come.

Horrors indeed, but not quite immediately, for *The Rats* is a semi-role playing game, and the first persona you adopt is Foskins, Under Secretary of State and the lucky man given the job of allocating resources to deal with the growing rodent menace. This is done on a map of London, which also serves to indicate whenever reports of rats arise.

True to Herbert's novel, the government is slow to provide emergency forces, so at first your strategies are severely limited. Rat-Kill is a specialist pest extermination organisation and you can also draw on the fire brigade and police. Eventually, as attacks increase the army becomes available.

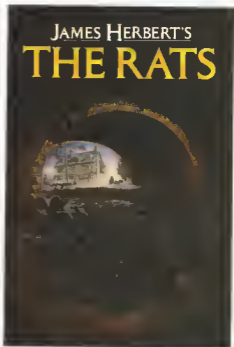
Each service has a variety of weapons to choose from. Anybody can be given a protective suit while the police can be allocated dogs, riot shields and rifles. Rat-Kill personnel can use chemical gas while the firemen have high-pressure water hoses and axes and the army has guns and flame throwers.

You also need to take research and development into account. This allows you to investigate where the rats are coming from, how to defend humans against the menace, how to kill the rats; and the biology of the menace. As more information becomes available the boffins might devise sonic locators, sonic scramblers, electric stun pods or anti-Ratus gas. It's left to you to discover how effective these weapons are.

You aren't given long to explore your options before an alarm sounds and you're into your first rat attack. These encounters are presented as mmo adventures loaded randomly from a selection of scenarios. Each starts with you being told your surroundings and which of Herbert's characters you are.

One of the nicest things about the game design is that it's entirely controlled by joystick or cursor keys. Commands use nouns containing all the verbs and nouns

Deep below the Hall Of Fame lies the mausoleum devoted to horror software. John Minson descends a hair-raising encounter with *The Rats!*



which are relevant to the situation. Not only are you spared the hassle of searching for the right word, you might also find the Run Away option you want is suddenly unavailable.

Running away is indeed often the surest, if not the only way, to survive. However if you constantly avoided encounters, there will be no new information for Foskins to use as the basis for his campaign. Which means moving into ever more dangerous areas as the real-time information appears on screen. You can afford to lose certain characters to a grisly death but the lives of hero Harris, scientist Howard and Foskins have to be preserved at all costs.

As the game switches between strategic rounds and ever more dangerous adventure encounters, you gather information which allows the R&D boys to discover the rats' lair and to develop the necessary weapons to destroy them. You also have to keep track of where sightings are occurring in order to discover the secret runs used by the rodents.

The use of real-time action keeps you on your toes. If you don't act fast as Foskins you won't be prepared for the individual encounters. And these dramatic interludes carefully adopt Herbert's techniques to develop a high level of horror. No punches are pulled when it came to describing the attack on Paula Blakey's baby, for example.

Hodder wasn't the only book publisher at this time to dabble in software but it never became a force to challenge the Oceans and US Golds. Perhaps because it wasn't part of the software establishment it didn't bring preconceptions about existing genres and what a game should be to the design stage. The result was a novel program with an elegant control system which generated a nail biting atmosphere.

HALL OF FAME

How does a game qualify for the Hall of Fame? It may have been a best seller in its day or overlooked and underrated.

But one thing's for certain, it led the field, either creatively or technically. Clones don't qualify, however competent.

And it's got lasting appeal. It's the program you still want to play after years - not weeks. So if you've got any suggestions, drop us a line.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR, BARGAIN HUNTERS!



in the

90 ACE Charts

Sea if your stalking horse has become a cash cow. Lots of bullish action in the markets this month. For your definitive news of the movements and reviews, just turn the page

95 Hardware Buyer's Guide

New Year - new machine? If your heart is set on buying a new set of chips to help '91 go with a bang, we've got the specs, the breakdowns, the details and the gen on every 16-bit machine on the market. Wise buyers should read thoroughly.

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Small ads, big sales. Your chance to buy, sell and tell the world.



ACE has brought you over 88 issues of packed with info on games technology if you're missing any back issues - each as 54p one saving the Philips CD-i hardware - then check out page 138

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The ACE Charts give you the definitive list of top scoring games EVERY MONTH - as reviewed by ALL British games magazines.

DIY YOU WIN LAST MONTH?

Yet again, readers were extraordinarily consistent in spotting certain games, and completely aghast at others. For example, NO-ONE spotted *Flirting* on the C64, or *Spelzlay Wards*, and hardly anyone got *Meltdown* for the PC (but well done to teacher *Stephen Sweet* of *Magnum*!). However, lots of people spotted *Powermonger* for the Amiga (a prize to *Ardween Akram* of *Hiwire*), and *Ivan Ironman Stewart* on the Spectrum (congratulations *Robert Vase* of *Chorford*). Finally, on the CPC, dozens all embraced spotted *Iren Lord* - including a surprising number of owners of other formats (and also exciting winner *Ivan Kirby* of *Murwell Hill*).

Next month we're making big improvements to the Stock Market page - don't miss them! They'll include a regular showing for the Gallup sales-based charts, so by comparing them with our own charts we can tell if review ratings (which determine the ACE Chart positions) really make any difference!

What you can win...

You'll get a mysterious game worth up to £25 for your machine if you can pick out NEXT MONTH's Top Chart entries. Get all five right in any category and you'll get £150 worth of software! Entry instructions are opposite.

THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. It's a list of the top 25 software as determined by the ratings that games are currently receiving. You can see them fortresses rising and falling in each issue.

Having collated all the games reviewed in the latest issues of computer magazines, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the second column. So, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but latches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC chart printed over the page. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.

The last column shows how well a company's games have fared compared to the Software Index. This single figure represents the average review mark (expressed as a percentage) that all games, all formats, recast during the last month. It's a guide to help you gauge the current crop of titles is, and each company's index score shows how well their games compare to the norm. For example, in this month's chart, Empire's current titles are worth 8.18 percentage points above average - according to the industry's reviewers.

We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we keep tabs on all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue.

Occasionally, a new company will enter the listings, in which case its name is marked with an asterisk.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't assist companies which have only received a single solitary review.

Software Index: 75.42
Holding steady at around 75.5 over the Christmas period

PUBLISHER	SCORE	+/-	INDEX	Micropro	81.81	-1.88	8.39
Chimera	90	n/a	14.58	Rainbow Arts	81.53	-0.83	6.11
Micro Style	85.48	+1.33	11.06	Audiogic	80.33	-0.72	4.91
Palace	85.5	+3.96	10.06	System 3	79	1/2	3.58
Gemline	85.27	+1.6	9.85	Mirrorsoft	79	-3	3.58
Empire	83.58	+8.72	8.18	Hewson	79	+1.83	3.58
Electronic Arts	83.53	+4.92	6.11	Core Design	77.58	+8.06	2.18
Digital Magic	83.5	-3.25	8.06	Ensaite	77.1	+5.1	1.68
Action 18	82	+8	8.58	Melencian	76.61	+2.81	1.19
SSI/US Gold	82.81	+8.51	7.38	Cole Masters	76.6	+8.29	1.18
Virgin	82.28	+4.15	8.88	US Gold	76.43	4.03	1.01
Activision	81.88	-1.74	8.58	Ocean	76.38	5.86	0.86
Amiga	81.85	n/a	8.43	Pygmalion	76.18	-1.87	0.78

AMIGA

Powermonger	Electronic Arts	96.37
Killing Gama Show	Pygmalion	87
Lotus Turbo Esprit	Gemline	86.09
Robocop 2	Ocean	87.88
Cadaver	Image Works	87.38

Powermonger retains its number one slot from last month - and even increases its lead over the runners-up.

C64

Golden Age	Virgin	82
Auck Rogers - Doomsday	SSI/US Gold	81.25
Rick Dangerous 2	Micro Style	80.69
Midnight Resistance	Ocean	80.27
Puznic	Ocean	87.5

Good strong C64 chart with brand new, original games, shaking off the budget image that it's had for most of the year. Here at ACE we reckon *Rick Dangerous 2* deserves the number 1 slot, though.

AMSTRAD CPC

Wheels of Fire	Domark	86
Shadow of the Beast	Gemline	83
Sim City	Infogames	82
Time Machine	Activision	81
Tiger Road	Klax	79

Competition are always good value, and Domark's TNT moves to number one. Nice to see that *Sim City*, highly acclaimed on 16-bit machines, has converted well to the CPC.

IBM PC

Wing Commander	Origin	93.05
Midwinter	Rainbird	93.5
Secret of Monkey Island	US Gold	89.86
Sim Earth	Maxis/Ocean	88.25
Buck Rogers - Doomsday	SSI/US Gold	88

Midwinter's STILL here and this is *Monkey Island's* second month in the top five. Early days yet for Maxis's astonishing *Sim Earth*!

WHAT THE FIGURES ABOVE MEAN...

First, of course, you've got the game. Then the software house end - in the left column - the average score (converted to a percentage with typical ACE precision to two decimal places) the game received in ALL reviews during the last month. Don't forget that the review ratings are taken from all UK magazines, not just ACE, so we don't necessarily agree with some of the judgements here, but all review ratings are, to a certain extent, subjective.

SPECTRUM AND ST CHARTS
OPPOSITE

HOW TO ENTER

STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** - or write your entry on the back of an **envelope**. Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, and the Round Number.

STEP TWO

Tell us your age and which machine you own. Just in case you win!

STEP THREE

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the six machine-specific charts. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the Spectrum
- the top game for the C64
- the top game for the CPC's
- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL)

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket (ask us for this page). Enter on the card: **The top software will be...** (name of company)

STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL)

If you want to go for the jackpot £150 prize,

then select any of the previous categories and try to predict the top FIVE entries for next month instead of just the top one. Then tell us which category you're predicting for - it can be either the Stockmarket or any of the machine categories in Step Three. **REMEMBER - YOU CAN ONLY SUBMIT ONE JACKPOT CATEGORY!**

STEP SIX

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us in arrears not later than the closing date for this round (31st January). The address is

ACE Stockmarket
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London

ECIR 3AU

The first correct forecast for each category taken out of the hat wins the prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize.

THIS IS ROUND 15

Each month's competition has a round number so that we can correctly identify entries. You **MUST** include the round number on your postcard otherwise your entry may not be processed correctly.

THE RULES

- All entries must be received by January 31st 1991
- No employees of EMAP (or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine) are eligible to enter.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting (not just a proof of delivery)
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the wireless pumping!

ATARI ST

Speedball 2

Nina Lives
M1 Tank Platoon
Immortal
Team Yankee

Image Works

ARC
Microprose
Electronic Arts
Empire

READ
PAGE
96,97
98,99
100
101,102

Immortal hangs on in there as *Speedball 2* zips in with a bullet to number one. *M1 Tank Platoon* has been a long time coming, but was obviously worth the wait...

SPECTRUM

R-Type

Teen' Mutant Hero Turtles
NARC
Panic Dangerous 2
Rick

Hrt Squad

Image Works
Ocean
Micro Style
Ocean

98
99
101
102
103

It seems slightly ironic that a two year old budget program has beaten *Turtles* to the number one slot. *RD2* deserves its placing however, and *Pang's* a neat little cutie.



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SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: A very wide base exists in all fields except games.

Current Releases: Adequate, though largely of US origin and in the business or DTP field.

Games: Very few in-cade titles but plenty of icon-driven adventures.

Graphics: Lots of excellent software for those interested in DIY pub lishing.

Music: Very well supported for MIDI software—but it's expensive to boot.

Prospect: As always, excellent—especially in business and DTP.

Software Loading: Quick and reliable.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Generally the RRP—Macs are only sold through dealerships. Ask for a discount for cash.

Second Hand Availability: Scarce and expensive. A better market exists in older models but these are best avoided.

Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Apple offers AppleCare—"insurance" you take out to cover the cost of repairs after the guarantee has run out.

ATARI ST



Models: Atari 520STFM, 520STE, 1040STE, Mega STx, Stacy.
Package: 520 and 1040 have key board with built-in disk drive, Mega versions have separate keyboard.
Power Pack includes 520STE with light gun, joystick and £400 of "free" software. New "Discovery" pack includes similar value software to Power pack but with an STFM and an educational bent.

Memory: 520STFM and 520STE 512K, 1040STE 1Mb, Mega ST 1, 2 or 4Mb, Stacy 2 or 4Mb. STx machines expand internally to 4Mb.

Processor: Motorola 68000.
Recommended Retail Price: 520STE (Power Pack) £359, 520STFM (Discovery Pack) £299, 1040STE £499, Stacy N/A.
Contact: Atari 0753 33364

IN BRIEF

Excellent as a general purpose home machine for games, small business and productivity. It's the number one choice for MIDI musicians. The ST's price still gives it a slight edge over the graphically more advanced Amiga. The new baby ST—Stacy—is tipped by Atari to be the musician's machine since it is a complete 2Mb or 4Mb ST with hard disk and mono monitor in a small box.

The upgrade path is long and filled with potential pitfalls. Here, as part of our reader service, is the fully updated ACE guide to the machines you're most likely to want which will help you find the one best suited to your needs.

Due to space restrictions this guide is run in two halves. 16 bit machines this month and consoles next. When space permits, we'll print both. Good hunting!

ACORN ARCHIMEDES

Models: Archimedes 310, 3000, 410 420, 440.

Package: keyboard, mouse and drive; keyboard mouse and drive plus monitor (colour or mono).

Memory: 3000 512K, 310 1Mb, 410 1Mb, 420 2Mb, 440 4Mb.

Processor: Acorn ARM.
RP: Prices range from £789 97 for A3100 alone to £2664 60 for A440 with colour monitor.
Contact: Acorn 0223 245200

IN BRIEF

Still the cutting edge of micro technology. Acorn's ARM is about the fastest thing this side of a Cray. This very exciting machine—although gathering admirers since the intro duction of the A3000—still lacks a good games software base and is best left to the enthusiast.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 256 or 640 x 256 with normal monitors. 640 x 512 available with multi-sync monitors.
Palette: 4096.
Colours: From mono up to 256 (320 x 256) or 16 (640 x 512).

TV:

Monitor Output: Mono composite video; colour—RGB + sync.
Monitor Supplied: Depends on package bought.

Monitor Options: Acorn dedicated 14 inch medium res colour; 12 inch high res mono; Multi-sync colour.
Sprites: 1.
Speed: Blistering

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good.
MIDI: With extra hardware.
Stereo Output: Yes.
Performance: 16 Channels (8 stereo pairs); 8 octaves, 1 internal speaker.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch—800K.
Disk Price: From £1.20 upwards.
Disk Performance: Good and fast.
Keyboard: 103 keys with programmable auto-repeat. Early keyboards have a cheap feel given the quality of the machine.
Joystick/Mouse: 3 button mouse; no support for joysticks.

Interfaces: 25 pin D parallel, 9 pin mouse, 3.5mm stereo headphone Jack, 64 way din, 45612 expansion port, IEC 320 video output, I/O interface.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Still very limited. Some games available most software is for productivity and business.

Current Releases: See above.
Games: Most famous are Zarch (Virus) and Conqueror. But there have been several impressive one-off titles released recently.

Graphics: Potential is enormous. Some excellent packages available.
Music: Like graphics, but developers remain shy.

Prospects: Limited. Even the cheapest models find it tough competing with 515 and Amiga.

Software Loading: Very reliable.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: Still scarce, some 305 and 310s starting to appear but expect to pay for them.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to faulty machines dealer.

APPLE MACINTOSH

Models: Classic, SE/30, LC, Ixi.
Package: Monitor with built-in CPU and disk drive, separate keyboard.
Memory: 1Mb (Classic), 2Mb

(Classic 2, SE/30, LC 8010), 5Mb (Ixi).
Processor: Motorola 68000 (SE/30), 68020 (LC), 68030 (SE/30, Ixi).

Recommended Retail Price: Classic 1 £575, Classic 2 £895, SE/30 £2395+0inc; 40Mb hard disc, LC £1235 (inc; 40Mb hard disc), Ixi £2395 (2Mb+40Mb hard disc), £2645 (5Mb+40Mb hard disc), £2995 (5Mb+80Mb) (all ex VAT).
Contact: Apple 081-569-1199

IN BRIEF

A very expensive yet marvellous machine for those keen on desktop publishing, WIMP systems and up-market systems. Releases of the Classic range an exciting move for wannabe Mac owners. Software is very expensive. Quite a few games in the US, but few over here. Good for MIDI musicians but be prepared to pay through the nose for software.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Classic & SE 512 x 342, LC 640 x 480, Ixi 640 x 480 (colour) & 640 x 870 (grey).

Palette: Classic & SE are black and white, LC 256; Ixi 256 or 16 greys in max. res.

Colours: 256 with colour monitor.

TV: No.

Monitor Output: Integral monitor.

Monitor Supplied: Yes.

Monitor Options: Hi res mono & colour available for LC & Ixi.

Sprite: None.

Speed: Classic: okay; Classic 2, SE/30 & LC reasonably fast; Ixi very fast.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good.

MIDI: Third party interfaces available.

Stereo Output: Ixi yes, rest no.

Performance: 4 channels give good performance.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch—1.44Mb.

Disk Price: £1.50—£2.00.

Disk Performance: Generally fast.

Keyboard: Separate with 81 keys including function keys and numeric key pad. Optional extra is the Apple Extended keyboard with 105 keys.

Joystick/Mouse: Joystick is not supported, high quality single button mouse is supplied with machine.

Interfaces: SE/30—Apple Desktop Bus connect; 2 RS232C/RS422 serial, external disk drive, 96 pin Euro-Din expansion slot, SCSI—DB-25 connect; external audio amplifiers Ixi—2

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Low res 320 x 200, medium res 640 x 200, high res 640 x 400

Palette: STFM 512, STE 4096, Stacy 2

Colours: Black and white in high res, 4 colours in medium res, 16 in low-res.

TV: Yes. Not Stacy.

Monitor Output: STFM models only

otherwise through TV modulator

Monitor Supplied: No; Stacy has integral LCD monitor

Monitor Options: Atari monitors SM124 high res mono, SC1442 med res colour

Sprites: 1

Speed: Fast

NR High resolution display is only available on monochrome monitor, medium and low res displays only available on colour monitors or TVs. **Bitbit:** fitted to late ST7M6 (standard on STE) improves the GEM access

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor

MIDI: Yes

Stereo Output: STE only.

Performance: 3 channel sound is average to good depending on software. ST features 8 bit PCM sound, but no current software uses it.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch - 720K

Disk Price: £1.20 to £1.50

Disk Performance: Reliable and fast. Early machines were supplied with a single-sided disk drive

Keyboard: 95 keys including 10 functions keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party sprung keys

Joystick/Mouse: 2 joystick ports are standard, 2 button mouse is supplied with a trackball

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Excellent. A few budget titles are starting to appear now

Current Releases: None of the major software houses ignore the ST so it is well served with plenty of good software

Games: Across the board

Graphics: Good with some excellent software to manipulate them

Music: Excellent. Plenty of sound samplers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice

Prospects: Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK and the ST has failed to capture a market in the States

Software Loading: A hangover from the original machines is the 360K disk format which means few companies bother to supply double-sided disks. This means large games require two or more disks with all the tedious disk swapping this entails.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRR; Watch out

for the twice yearly bundles. **Second Hand Availability:** Very common and quite cheap. STs do not hold their value well - beware very old, single side modlines. **Maintenance:** One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty

COMMODORE AMIGA

Models: Amiga A500, A2000, A3000

Package: A300 has keyboard and built-in drive with separate PSU, A2000 has separate keyboard with built-in (fan assisted) PSU. Recently released A3000 is a very powerful machine indeed.

Memory: A500 512K, A2000 1M, A3000

Processor: 500/2000 Motorola 68000 A3000 68030 16 or 25MHz

Recommended Retail Price: A500 £NA, A2000 £1236.25, Britman Pack £399.99, Flight of Fantasy Pack £399.99, Class Of The 30's pack £579.99. A3000 from £2658. **Contact:** 0628 878888

IN BRIEF

A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most exigent of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has overtaken the ST in the UK, though the latter machine still has a slightly larger installed base. The A3000 is a top end workstation substitute, includes Workbench 2, featuring enhanced fonts, file handling, and security features plus Amiga Visior, a multi-media programming tool. A3000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 16MHz, 40Mbyte hard disk at £2659 to a 25/100 at £3610.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)

Palette: 4096

Colours: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096

TV: With modulator

Monitor Output: SCART + composite video in monochrome

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: CT084 £349.99

Sprites: 16 in hardware + unlimited 8085 from software drive

Speed: Very fast with good software.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.

MIDI: No. Third party interfaces available

Stereo Output: 2 phono connectors.

Performance: Among the best around. Custom hardware squeezes 9 octaves of 16 bit digital sound into the four channels

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch - E37K A3000/40/100Mbyte hard disk formatted

Disk Price: £1.20 - £2.00

Disk Performance: Noisy and sluggish. Third party software is available to improve matters

Keyboard: 94 keys. 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster

Joystick/Mouse: 2 button mouse supplied as standard

Interfaces: Two joystick/mouse, stereo audio, external disk drives;

RS232 serial; Centronics parallel printer; SCART RGB/video, composite monochrome video, expansion bus

(internal on A2000, 32-bit on A3000), clock/memory expansion on A3000 only; internal PC expansion on A2000 and A3000

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: As ST's. **Current Releases:** Everyone's doing them

Games: Something for everyone. **Graphics:** Quality and range is unsurpassed.

Music: Needs better support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to IFF standards

Prospects: Excellent. **Software Loading:** Noisy but usually reliable. Plagued by viruses

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lack the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack

Second Hand Availability: Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2

Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers

IBM PC

Best Buy Price: Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lack the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack

Second Hand Availability: Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2

Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers

Resolution: CGA 320 x 200; VGA 640 x 480, Hercules 720 x 384, VGA 800 x 600

Palette: CGA 8 lin two fixed sets; EGA 64, VGA 256

Colours: CGA 4 EGA 16, VGA 64, Hercules 2.

Monitor Output: TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA), analogue RGB (E/VGA)

Monitor Options: Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes - some have amber, green or white monochrome displays - check before buying

Sprites: None

Speed: From very slow - 8088 to very fast - 80486

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Built-in sound is poor. Third party add-on boards such as Roland (L380) and Ad-Lite (L1501) which is fast becoming a standard provide synthesiser quality sound through an amplifier

MIDI: Third party interfaces available

Stereo Output: With boards, yes

Performance: Not the ideal basic machine for the musically bent - an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound

Memory: Usually 512K or 640K. Can be anything from 64K to 1M+.

Always go for a 640K model.

Processor: Intel 8088/8086 in base machine is sometimes replaced with the faster NEC V20/90. Most expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 286, 386/5x, 386 and even the latest 486

Recommended Retail Price: Can be picked up as little as £295 for a "no frills" machine. With top-of-the-range 486 based clones - and the official IBM versions - the sky's the limit. Look for a good EGA or VGA model for between £750 and £1200

IN BRIEF

Superb value if you want the ultimate all-rounder, the PC still beats its business rivals. Almost every major software house now ports their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic (most common) machines - which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT first choice if entertainment is your preferred use for computers, or if you cannot afford the better EGA or VGA models (which are really essential for good games playing)

GRAPHICS

The first PCs weren't fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware

and come with a monitor. There are four main standards: CGA - a nasty but all too common colour display;

EGA - about the lowest colour option worth considering; VGA - an

Amiga/ST beating display, and Hercules - monochrome only. EGA and VGA are usually only fitted as standard to more expensive machines (Amstrad's PC2086 is one exception)

Resolution: CGA 320 x 200; VGA 640 x 480, Hercules 720 x 384, VGA 800 x 600

Palette: CGA 8 lin two fixed sets; EGA 64, VGA 256

Colours: CGA 4 EGA 16, VGA 64, Hercules 2.

Monitor Output: TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA), analogue RGB (E/VGA)

Monitor Options: Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes - some have amber, green or white monochrome displays - check before buying

Sprites: None

Speed: From very slow - 8088 to very fast - 80486

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Built-in sound is poor. Third party add-on boards such as Roland (L380) and Ad-Lite (L1501) which is fast becoming a standard provide synthesiser quality sound through an amplifier

MIDI: Third party interfaces available

Stereo Output: With boards, yes

Performance: Not the ideal basic machine for the musically bent - an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound

points

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 5.25in—180/360K/1.2Mb, 3.5in 720K/1.44Mb

Disk Price: \$69—£3 00

Disk Performance: Average. Most PC owners also buy hard disks. A large amount of PC applications software refuses to work unless you have a hard disk.

Keyboard: Almost as many variations as there are clones. Prefer the AT or extended AT layouts to the XT layout since it's easier to use.

Joystick/Mouse: Neither supplied as standard. The better clones

include a mouse or at least a mouse port, especially since IBM's WIMP system (Windows) has become more popular.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Vast! **Current Releases:** All major software houses now produce for the PC, with many now supporting the superior E/VGA modes.

Games: Most of the Amiga/ST titles appear on PC sooner or later.

Graphics: Given the right graphics adaptor, the PC has nice graphics and the software is usually excellent

On a CGA PC the graphics stink no matter how good the software is. **Music:** Unsurpassed it's pathetic. However, add on boards offer some of the best sound you'll hear on home computers.

Prospects: The PC is the eternal champion—as others fell by the way side it carries on getting faster and better all the time. This is aided by Intel constantly improving the machine's processor and the vast user base demanding better software.

Software Loading: Fast and reliable, very fast from hard disk

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Watch out for package deals for large themes and mail order companies. If you don't know too much about PCs go for a name you know.

Second Hand Availability: Common but be careful you do not get a clapped out monitor/keyboard. **Maintenance:** Usually a year's guarantee—but competition has forced the price of maintenance contracts down to affordable levels. This often means that they fix machines in-situ for free.

HARDWARE UPGRADE

The big fear of most when upgrading is that your new machine will become obsolete within a few months of purchase or, even worse, the company manufacturing the machines will go out of business. No such fears with the machines on offer here.

Current 16-bit technology is unlikely to change for at least five years. That's because although the leap from 8-bit to 16-bit architecture represents a quantum leap in power, the upgrade from 16-bit to 32-bit is nowhere near as dramatic in processing terms. 32-bit tech-

nology, however, would generate significantly higher construction costs, but without a really worthwhile increase in functionality.

And there are no chances of Apple, IBM, Commodore, Atari or Acorn going under in the foreseeable future.

For that reason, the ST, the Amiga, and the PC are probably here to stay for some considerable time, so you can choose between them (or the Archi and Apple) without worry.

Of course, there is one other consideration: consoles. Our view at ACE (and we've said it

before, and we'll say it again) is very definitely this: consoles undoubtedly offer greater arcade gaming possibilities and the forthcoming CD-ROM units and smart cards should help iron out some of the data storage problems that make these machines unsuitable for data-hungry scenarios. However, the added functionality of a computer with keyboard and expansion options remains, in our opinion, essential to true state of the art gaming.

The inevitable conclusion is this: that you need a console AND a 16-bit computer! And when it comes to consoles, we only really have two strong recommendations at present, the

Nintendo Gameboy and the Sega Megadrive (see our article recommending this unit and comparing the opposition in Issue 36 of ACE).

To help you with the console choice, however, next month see the ACE Hard Sell Console Section, with all the facts and figures you need about the various contenders. So there!



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Operation Spruance (Modern Naval) (Parsec)	Amiga 1Mb	£29.99
Harpoon (Modern Naval) (360)	IBM, Amiga 1Mb	£39.99
Harpoon Battle Set #2(North Atlantic Convoy) (360)	IBM	£24.99
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This is a small selection of titles now available a more detailed description of these and many more can be found in our catalogue



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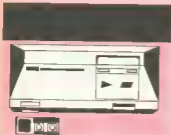
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Three new official launches from SEGA landed on our desks this month. And what a wide spectrum of gaming styles they encompass. There's Aerial Assault, an out-and-out sports 'em-up. There's World Cup Italia 90 for sports fans and there's even Ultima IV offering a rare role-playing treat for Master system owners.

WORLD CUP ITALIA 90

When World Cup Italia 90 was converted onto home machines, after being reasonably well received in the arcades, the immediate obstacle it had to overcome was the competition from the reigning great of sports games, Kick Off.

Unfortunately, the comparisons weren't especially kind, with World Cup falling down in all the areas where Kick Off did so well.

Now the game is on the Master, it seems to be much more at home. It was never intended to be a realistic interpretation of soccer, more a

knockabout flavour of the game. Indeed, there aren't even enough players on each team. The degree of finesse which you have over the ball is at best limited and at worst laughable.

However, the speed of the game, the swift switchover from player to player and the 3D penalty shoot out offer easy-to-pick-up fun superior to Kick Off. The penalty section itself is excellent, with you and an opponent (computerised or human) pitted against each other in a high-speed battle of reactions.

AERIAL ASSAULT

Fans of UN Squadron will find no surprises here, just an entertaining horizontal scrolling blast. Your feisty, medium or hard mission is detailed on your HUD computer, and it's off into the wide blue yonder to do some killing. Spinning enemy jets drop power-ups (speed, multi-directional fire, bombs etc) and you must face a wide variety of enemy attacks before reaching your target. While the presentation may seem a little hackneyed, the gameplay is sound.

ULTIMA IV

Lord British, the wise and compassionate ruler of Britannia wishes to erase the legacy left behind by three evil lords. And he is out to recruit you to do the job.

Those unfamiliar with the Ultima games should play this one in the shops before buying, as it may not be to your taste. Even addicts of the genre will find the re-designed text narrative difficult to read.

© Jim Douglas



We've got a super competition for all you Megadrive owners this month, but more of that in a moment...

EXCLUSIVE CITY!

Next month's ACE will be of particular interest for Megadrive owners! We've got an exclusive interview with some Stateside programmers who have been working away on some super-sexy cartridge entertainment in secret until NOW!

In a scorching exclusive, we get the guys to dish the dirt on their newest games. We can't name them yet, but just wait until next month - you'll be amazed!

ELECTRONIC ARTS

EA have wowed 16-bit machine owners with games like Populous and Indy 500. And now they're getting ready to turn their hand to the Megadrive. They say they want to maximise their coding potential and marry it with the superb

capabilities of the Megadrive. The next issue of Ace will be carrying a sneak preview of their new releases, along with a deppy companion between the style of EAs stat-packed simulation software and how it will convert onto a console system.

MEGADRIVE COMPETITION

Everyone knows that there's nothing finer to start the New Year like a whopper bundle of free software. And so, you'll be pleased to hear that simply by exercising a couple of dominant brain cells you can scoop a fabulous bag of Megadrive loot. We're giving away £100 worth of software to the first person out of the hat who has answered all of the questions correctly and has written the best phrase at the end.

So, it couldn't be more simple; just read the questions below, fill in your answers on the coupon and send it (in the back of an envelope) to: ACELINES MEGADRIVE COMPO, Phony Court, 30-32 Farnington Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The competition closes on February 8th.

THE QUESTIONS

- 1) What was the Megadrive called in the USA at Genesis?
 - a) U2
 - b) U2
 - c) 10cc
- 2) How many bits has the central processor?
 - a) 16
 - b) 18
 - c) 2.0GT

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AMIGA



Xmas is over for another year. Did you get the games you wanted? I finally got a limited version of Electronic Art's *Powermonger* and it's brilliant! Congratulations to programmers Bullfrog.

TOTAL THE-IN

Well, I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it. Ocean has finally released *Total Recall* for review and it, just in time for the video showing. Because of ACE's tight pre-Xmas deadline it just missed getting into this issue - we had hoped to do a big *Robocop-Recall* special - but it will definitely be getting the full ACE treatment next time.

However, I can give you my early opinions on it, though I should point out that I've only played through the first two levels so this should not be thought of as being a definitive review!

My first impressions were mixed. The music

by David Whittaker - computer music maestro who recently wrote the tunes for *Shadow of the Beast 2* - is excellent and suits the nature of the game and film perfectly. Unfortunately the pre-game intro sequence is very disappointing due to the fact that Ocean are not allowed to copy Arnie's likeness, unless it comes directly from the film (i.e. the poster or stills). Therefore the bloke in the intro and the game doesn't look anything like the man himself. A pity.

The first level takes place just after Quaid's disastrous visit to Rakali. The baddy Cohagen's men chase Quaid as he searches for pieces of helpful equipment on a multi-directional scrolling network of platforms and lifts. Luckily there's a gun to help Quaid defend himself. This level's incredibly bloody, due to the hordes of baddies and the slow lung rate of the gun.

Survive this and you can try to escape in Johnny Cab. You look down on a road, and control the cab on a road scrolling from left to right, jam packed with other cabs and nasty black cars that fire at you. I wasn't immediately taken with this level - it looks very primitive and is highly reminiscent of the *Batcar* levels in the *Bat* version of Ocean's *Batman*. However it does grow on you and it's quite addictive.

Overall I'm a little disappointed by *Recall*. For a start, Ocean seem to have jumbled up the plot - in the first level you're looking for the suitcase, which surely Quaid didn't find until after the Cab chase? The game itself seems very derivative of other Ocean games and it's very tough in places. That said, there's a fairly strong urge to come back and play again. Give it a good try in the

shop before you buy or wait for the full review next month.

IT'S TIPPIN' TASTIC!

Oooh, baby, she's got it! And so have we. I'm talking about the passcodes to the higher levels in *Genlain's* attractive and original shoot-'em-up *Verzuz - The Fly Trap*. So here they are:

- Level 2: MANTIOS
- Level 3: CIGADAS
- Level 4: PSYLLIDS
- Level 5: PIERIDS
- Level 6: SATYRID
- Level 7: LYCAENID
- Level 8: PYRALID

My word, just the sort of passcodes you'd have a jolly good chance of guessing, aren't they? Thanks to Sigi Goode of Deaku in Australia for those...

Yes, yet another letter from down-under! I think I get more letters from the antipodeans than the natives! Anyway, Sigi (I) also tells me that you can jump to the last level of *Domark/Tengen's Kix* by holding down the spacebar and the '4' key all the same time. As Sigi say, it makes the game pretty boring but there you go!

And a final 'Hello' to Mark Madmark! Spiteen from Malta. He's one of the hordes who sent in a jolly solution to *Psygnosis' Shadow of the Beast 2*. Sorry, no prizes for first place cos Russell Lazzari and Phil Baxter got there before you all (see T'n'T). But at least you got a name mention, eh Madmark? So go say yah-boo-sucks to all your mates!

© Sam Veniers

ATARI ST



For this month's review of new Atari ST software we're concentrating on MIDI-based music products, there have been so many in the last couple of months that an update is sorely needed. For pros, Steinberg's *Cubase V2.0* sequencer is now available the main update is the long-awaited addition of scoreprint-ing.

Other new features include IPS-interactive *Prata Synthesis*. This allows a musical phrase to be "filtered" through a series of processors using programmable harmonic and rhythmic rules altering the note length, position density, pitch, velocity and transposition, modified cyclically by "Low Frequency Oscillators", each with their own frequency and amplitude then edited further. *Cubase V2.0* costs £350-odd, but there's now a cut-down file-compatible version for the 1 meg ST, *Cubase*.

It's still priced at £285, but has most of the features of *Cubase*, including 16x64 tracks, VSP (Visual Song Processing), MROS multi-task-

ing, human sync, key and grid editing, multiple MIDI channel recording, chord recognition and so on; it doesn't have scorewriting or some of the more advanced MIDI management functions.

Holt's Research's *Trackman* is also up to V2.0, and you can now get a demo disk of this well-regarded sequencer, complete except for saving facilities (and it crashes after 20 minutes); also included on the disk is a fully-working patch library for the Roland D50, and over 500 patches for Yamaha 6-operator synths such as the DX7.

Take Control's excellent *Atari ST scorewriter Music Publisher* now has full MIDI implementation including note data input, playback of scores, and the ability to import MIDI disk files. The program now also allows import of graphics files in bit image and metafile formats, making the display options more flexible - scores can also be enlarged and reduced. MCMCXIX has announced the most professional music DTP package yet for the ST - *Passport Encore*. It's based on ideas developed in the *Master Tracks Pro* sequencer, and can intelligently transcribe and print out scores from *Master Tracks Pro*, *Trax*, and M.T. Jr. sequences, and MIDI standard files.

Encore requires a mono monitor and 1 meg memory, and can handle up to 64 musical "parts" at a time, using up to four voices per staff. Cost is £429. For budgeting musicians, there's *Trax*, an entry-level ST sequencer at £85. It looks very similar to *Master Tracks Pro*; it's file-compatible and has the same 64-track Track Sheet with functions such as MIDI channel/zabon, program numbering, naming, mute, solo and

loop; the graphic *Song Editor*, with cut/copy/paste functions; *Step Editor*, with click and-drag event editing; the *Tempo Conductor*; MIDI data lists; 240 PPOX resolution and tape-transport style recording controls.

The most enjoyable music software program around is PG Music's *Band-in-a-Box*, distributed in the UK by Zone. *BIAS* does for computer/synthesizer systems what the "easy-play" options do for home keyboards; it provides a bass, chord and drum accompaniment for you to play a melody over.

You can tailor the program to work with the required synths, then assign MIDI channels for the bass, chord and drum parts. To write a song accompaniment, just type chord letters and symbols into the lead-sheet display grid, and select *Play*.

All familiar chord types are supported, and you can change the tempo, number of repeats and such like using dialogue boxes. An update available shortly (I O to registered users)

includes multiple styles per song, tempo and patch changes, all of which can be saved as part of a disk file; variable time signatures; MIDI THRU option and a lync facility. A more extensive update available later includes user-definable styles. You can buy *Band-in-a-Box* for an incredibly low £45, or £69 complete with two "MIDI Fake Books" each featuring 250 files of classic songs, normally £20 each separately, or £35 including. Evenloke Soundworks - 0933 898484. Holt's Research - 0481 711851. MCMCXIX - 081 963 0663. Take Control - 021-706 6082. Zone Distribution - 081-766 6564.

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SPECTRUM



Well the New Year's most definitely with us now, every software company in the cosmos put their shoulders to the grindstone and their nose to the wheel to get all their big, Christmas games out of the door and into the software shelves for the Yuletide games season.

And that's just what they did - in it! Until you realize that several companies put the cart before the horse - promising Christmas blockbusters that never materialised!

Among a list of many games that failed to make the shelves before their shift-by-dites ran out are the two of the largest companies in the biz, Ocean's *Real Recall* on the Speccy, was withdrawn at the last moment - I saw it at an early stage and can say that they've made a good move - it's being almost entirely rewritten for the Spectrum. And then there's *ESWAT* which US Gold withdrew from the race at the last second when they decided that the product wouldn't be finished in time.

Both companies have been promising the two products for some time but have had problems producing good quality games within their deadlines.

There's still a contraction going on in the Spectrum market. We all know about the (doomed?) future of the i3. Or do we? Ending production is a really no great problem in itself because if Amstrad cease production of the product, the mall order boys will continue to stock them for as long as demand continues. How will it do this? Well, the Japanese may take a leaf out of Alien Squares's book, and produce the machine themselves. After all, the factory that makes all the components is in Taiwan, with the big bit put together at Amstrad. And, using the same reverse engineering as Amstrad, another company could easily re-start the old production line.

COMPILATION COMPLICATIONS

There are eager battles being fought between Spectrum titles at the moment as the magsazines fight for a market that is only big enough for two. Software houses are having a battle too, with everyone trying to come up with new ideas to sell games. The recent tape releases decision to increase full price games by a pound (which in terms of inflation seems almost sensible) shows the wizards level of imagination shown in this department.

If you want imaginative market

ing, then the big boys need look no further than the innovative CODEMASTERS. We all know that if you wait long enough, every full price game will eventually make it onto a budget label and be unleashed into a thriving market that accounts for 70% of all games software sales in Britain.

So what's innovative about the Codes? They're the first company to come up with the idea of budget compilations. Called the Quattro range, each tape has four budget games squeezed onto a single tape and covers a particular style of game, from Arcade to Combat, Adventure to Sports and so on with six different titles out at the moment. There are already 6 other titles to be released starting in the new year. All for the whizzy price of £2.99.

SAM OUTFOXES THE MARKET'S BOOT BOYS

Here's an interesting snippet of news for anyone thinking about buying a Sam Coupe. Rumours are afloat that MGT plan to upgrade the 5em in the new year to a full Megabyte of usable memory for only £70.

This would mean that the Sam's new price point with 1 Meg and a diskette would put it in competition with the Amiga and Atari - end with 1 Meg, it would mean that the mode 4 graphics (that are of a higher quality than either of its competitors) could be employed easily by games programmers utilising the Sam's bet speed to move its 24K screen around smoothly, quickly and above all, be more colourfully than either the standard Atan or Amiga can.

GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

So, what's happening in the Spectrum software market then? Well this month, sees the release of all the products that miss out at the time of writing they still stand a slim chance.

FTB - The latest flight sim to take off on the Spectrum this month comes from Digital Integration. Flying the infamous American fighter in any one of five missions, with new variables being generated for each mission, there's a lot of flying hours here. There's a lot of waiting time too if you get the game on tape.

GAZZA 2 - Just when you thought it was safe to cry in public, Paul 'Gizzling' Gascoigne makes his way back onto the Spectrum. Gazz 2 is actually very good. Its speed is excellent and the 3D perspective that made Gazz 1 so awful has been substituted for the very playable overhead view. It's just as lively whilst there's an option for two player games, only one of you can use a joy stick. Am'd you, using the keyboard could be ideal for away games.

That's you! Not for another month if you've got any news or view on the Speccy scene, do me a line!

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ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT 103

GAMEBOY

Last month's tips seem to go with a bang, judging by the bulging sacks we found ourselves with afterwards (Mafl sacks, that is!)



TURTLE POWER!

Those heroes in a half-shell seem to be a popular choice for Handheld freaks, eliciting a massive set of tips. JP Roche reckons that Bebop (level 2 guardian) can be defeated thus: 'As soon as you land in the room at the end of level 2, jump up as Bebop runs in from the left. He will fire his laser so use your weapon to absorb the beams. Jump up and somersault over him as he runs to the left of the screen. He will turn and fire, so absorb the beams with your weapon and strike him when he approaches. He will retreat, fire and punch. Carry out the same procedure four times to defeat him.'

Bonus levels can be obtained easily. Bonus game 1; in the first level, you've got to go right until you come across the first set of three barrels. Then you must jump in between the second and third barrel to destroy the second one. Now walk in the direction of the first barrel. Your turtle

will flash and you'll enter the bonus stage.

Bonus game 2 can be reached by walking right until you reach a piece of pipe above your head. Here, jump into the water. Don't jump up. Walk until you reach the wall. Again, the turtle will flash and you'll enter the bonus stage.

Bonus game 3 is found at the first level of the sewer stage 4. You have to walk until you meet the first set of bats. Now jump into the water and walk under the pipe in the wall.

CODES CODES CODES!

Christoph Schussler from Germany has been beavering away on *Puzznic* and has kindly produced a massive set of passwords. Ready?

002 ITOHMIWA	003 SAWAITHO
004 GOTAGOTO	005 OON.OO KO
006 PUZZNIC.	007 YUPONTAN
006 ZUN.DOKO	009 ZUN.TATA
010 TAKAMINE	011 NISYIWA
012 DARRUS.	013 FLIPPULL
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MOUND, MOUND, GET AMDUND, I GET AMDUND

And finally, there's a hint for players stuck in *Nemesis* from Konami from Ian Henderson. Ian says: 'Towards the end of the second stage, there's a large mound hanging from the roof of the cavern which produces bad guys. It also has a ship underneath it. Shoot out the ship and the mound and fly into the remains of the mound to enter the bonus stage.'

Thanks to all our posters this month, if you've got any game tips are are currently floundering in a gameboy game, drop me a line at the usual address.

Richard Evans

AMSTRAD CPC



We've gone fanzine crazy this month, readers. The postbag yielded a number of enthusiastically written and photocopied fanzines exclusively for Amstrad owners. First up, Wolfgang Rottger would like me to mention his own zine, CPC Power International, which can be obtained by anyone sending 4 International reply-paid coupons to:

CPC Power International, Im Vogelsang, 17 W-5000, Köln 50, Germany.

Those planning to contribute to or purchase a copy of Wolfgang's organ should be made aware, of course, that although it's packed with tips and letters and useful programming advice, it's all in German.

By far the best British fanzine to arrive is *Play Mates*, edited by Carl Surry from Bamel. Carl's mag is heavily games orientated and has a club-by-club which is a must for any good fanzine. Currently up to number four, *Play Mates*, as you would expect offers its readers a tips-line, depth reviews of new Amstrad games and utilities, and some useful artpics for those bent on

producing a masterpiece in bytes.

You can get yours a copy of *Play Mates* by sending 70p to:

Carl Surry
37 Fairfield Way,
Barnet,
Herts EN5 5BQ.

COMPETITION

So you reckon your fanzine is the best do you? Well, here's your chance to prove it. Send us a copy of your fanzine, together with a list of points on why you think it covers the current Amstrad scene better than any other. We'll be awarding a prize and printing extracts from the best entry we receive in the next ACE Lines.

Send your entries to:

ACE LINES AMSTRAD FANZINE
EMAP
Phory CI,
Farrington
London ECR 3AU
Compo closes, 8th February.

CONSOLE YOURSELF

Gremlin Graphics has been busily working away on their first project for the Amstrad Console, and hasn't it been worth the wait!

From the size of the packet to the style of the box artwork, this feels like a very Japanese product. Gremlin have certainly taken the cartridge

market by the horns.

In the game, you play Hiro, last of the Battleknights. You must collect the 16 fragments of the shattered Irelblade, in order to avenge the horrific and brutal slaying of your fellow countrymen.

You begin the game alone and unarmed in an apocalyptic wasteland, populated by nothing except horrible little mechanical scorpions. Touching these cyber-beasts will incur heavy hit points and you'll also probably get dragged backwards too.

After a little practise, it becomes easy to avoid these suckers and you'll swiftly find yourself exploring the network of underground tunnels and corridors which make up the evil war lord's empire.

Life in the tunnels is short. Enemy soldiers lurk around every turning, and you'll need to collect all the available weapons to survive.

Some of the screen-flicking, even on the console is a bit poor, with the screen building up as you malmalise on it. However, the detail of the backgrounds and variety of the enemies and traps you have to deal with puts *Switchblade* right up there with *Rick Dangerous* 2.

Obviously, collecting the 16 fragments of the Irelblade is far from easy. Simply slaying alive long enough to collect one seems like a tall order when you start, but the more you persevere, the greater the rewards.

Heartily congratulations go to Gremlin for a leaping headfirst into the consoles market rather than simply standing on the sidelines like so many other publishers. Full review next issue.

Richard Evans

IBM PC



I must be hell if you're one of the many PC owners who's still toiling with a monochrome screen. Because no matter how easy on the eye you're black and white (or for that matter amber or green) display may be, you end up looking wastefully at the glorious 256-colour VGA screenshots which adorn all computer magazines these days like a poor child with his nose pressed against the window of a sweet shop.

But do you really need all of those colours on your monitor to have a good session at your keyboard? No of course you don't: saying that colourful games are 'better' than their monochrome counterparts is like saying that Santa Clara The Movie is better than Casablanca.

Although good use of colour can enhance a playable game, if the original idea has what it takes then it doesn't matter if the display is the colour of a baboon's ass.

So now, for the first time ever, ACE is going to induct some members into its Hercules Hall Of Fame. The following list makes no claims to being exhaustive: it's simply a guide to a few already great games which lose nothing but their colour

C64



interesting comments from Anil Khedim on the 64 PD scene this month.

* A lot of you were going to do so many things with your Commodore 64s. It was thought to be praiseworthy for educational purposes, or at least that's what you told those who bought it for you. You would organise your accounts, make music, write letters to. That was in the beginning, but now people have said that the C64 has a very short life span. But that doesn't have to be the case.

Public Domain to the rescue! Surprisingly, a lot of 64 owners know nothing about what is available. It's time to put that right.

"When you say 'public domain', what do you think of? PC? Amiga? ST? That's what the majority of users would say anyway. If you've come across the wide variety of good and wonderful demos and programs that you can get for the 64, you'd also know that there's a lot of life in the old beast yet.

WHAT YOU GET

"Public Domain software has a wide range of uses. You want to do some programming? There are BASIC toolkits and machine-code

when they make the jump from one of the Geo-A4 family to Hercules.

XENON II - MEGABLAST

The Bitmap Brothers' definitive shoot 'em up is all the more impressive on the PC than it is on other machines because of the general lack of competition in this field. It seems that no matter what the configuration of machine it plays superbly, and the lack of colour is compensated for by a good use of grey shading. In fact, the only thing that this monster blaster is missing in support for any of the major sound boards - but then, if you've got a mono display then you're hardly likely to have one of those, are you? Xenon II is published by Image Works (071) 928 1454.

SHUFFLEPUCK CAFE

Although this isn't exactly the greatest game on Earth, it does offer a little short-lived arcade-style distraction. And it has one positive advantage in that it's actually better in mono than it is in colour! In EGA colour the table on which this game of intergalactic air hockey is played out is a serious strain on the eye. Hercules monochrome however, suits the game's atmosphere perfectly, making the board clearer and your opponents look very smoky indeed. Prospective Shufflepuckers should call Domark on (081) 780 2222.

SCRABBLE DE LUXE

Lecture Genus (part of the Virgin stable, on (071) 727 8070) specialises in adaptation of popular board games. And although this is soon to be superseded by Ultimate Scrabble, and this version

monitors around to make life that little bit easier. You can also find a small handful of games that were produced specifically for public domain, and I must say that the ones I have seen are of a good standard, so maybe you'd like to try them out. Is that all? Well, no. A large spread of word processors, spreadsheets, databases, art utilities, music routines. The list is almost endless.

Cassette users are catered for, but the list of programs around for tape-based machines is limited. Answer: get yourself a disk drive. You'll prolong the life of your machine, and open the door to a flood of new software.

Games will still be produced, of course, but there's nothing like a bit of funky music with flashy graphics to make you gasp. I've seen a lot of demos and they all seem to come from our European counterparts; Denmark, Germany, Norway etc. And they compete with each other to show off their talent. Exciting stuff!

While there will always be music and graphics demos for the Amiga, some of the finest 64 programs genuinely push the machine to its limits. A lot of these can be found on CompuNet and can be downloaded, but for people who don't have access to a modem, the public domain is where a large number of these demos and other programs can be found.

There aren't many PD clubs around that cater solely for 64 users, so if you know of anyone who distributes stuff, write in to ACE and let the world know they exist. The 64 will

probably end up on a budget label pretty soon, this one in particular works just as well (if not a little better) whether coloured or not.

PIPEMANIA

Empire's plumbing puzzles has just picked up a prestigious Tilt of Or award - and luckily this wasn't for its exceptional use of colour. Rather than simply changing the colours to greys, Hercules Pipemania utilises an all-new character and graphics set; whereas the colour version can carry off some extraneous graphical bits and bobs, this two-colour effort uses a plain grid and unglorified piping to make the graphics as clear as possible with no loss of playability. If you're interested, contact Empire on (0268) 541 126.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund's Middle-Eastern arcade adventure has caused quite a stir in the ACE office (as you may have noticed), and for once you owners of mono-screened PCs aren't going to be left in the dark as to what all the fuss is about. Although Hercules Prince Of Persia uses a smaller screen size than its coloured brothers, it's been rescaled perfectly and the main character still moves with the grace and dexterity of an olympic gymnast. Like all Broderbund games, this one is distributed in these parts by Domark - (081) 780 2222.

So, there we are. If you're willing to hunt around, it's perfectly possible to play lots of high-quality games in Hercules. There's no need for non vga players to lose out on the fun had by their colour counterparts.

©Clara Brown

be supported for a long while yet. Remember Public Domain is only as good as the people who will continue to support it. Long live the Commodore 64!

TELL ME MORE!

If it's demos you're after, then I heartily recommend WICKED PD. Write to:
Wicked PD
PO BOX 633
Basildon
Essex.

Also try CompuNet's pages. They're full of good demos, utilities and general tips. Write to:
CompuNet
Unit 26
Shetland Business Centre
Wadsworth Road,
Perrvale
Middlesex
UB7 7JB

If you would like a copy of Demo of the Year II (a compilation of Amiga demos from 1988), just send a blank disk and a stamp to me and I'll send you a taster of what's in store.

Anil Khedim (Demo)
47 Rosebury Avenue
Tottenham
London

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Got lots of Xmas gift money burning a hole in your pocket? Don't waste it on a duff title that won't even keep you hooked until teatime - look through this list, make a choice and buy with confidence!

The list you see here includes the highest-rated titles featured in ACE over the past three months, as well as some of the older but essential buys. All you see here should be available from your local dealer now.

B.A.T.

Ubisoft • Amiga £34.99 • Atan ST £34.99 • PC £TBA • C64 £TBA/cart
Set in the 22nd Century, you play

an agent of the Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters, or B.A.T. (or short: The arch-criminal Vrangor (made-up name!) is holding the planet Selena, home of the galaxy's major businesses, to ransom with chemical weapons. Lose Selena and there'll be galaxy-wide trouble. You've got to find Vrangor and stop him - quick! Two years in the making, all that effort shows in this graphic adventure par excellence. Every location and event is depicted graphically, with all game interaction carried out using the mouse. Not so much a game, more a way of life. As an added bonus, there's a play-in soundcard to give the humble ST Amiga-quality samples

• ACE RATING 908 ON ATARI ST

BATTLE CHESS 2

Electronic Arts • Amiga £24.99 • Atan ST £24.99 • PC £29.99
Sequel-to spreads from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a new bisecting the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an Imperial Palace. As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces 'talking' each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from floppies due to all the swapping, a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A good purchase for jaded Chess fans

• ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

BUCK ROGERS: COUNT-DOWN TO DOOMSDAY

SSI/US Gold • Amiga £TBA • PC £TBA • C64 £TBA
The year is 2456, and Buck Rogers, tactical genius and fearless defender of freedom, is disoriented from cryogenic suspension to help lead rebels on a ravaged Earth to victory and freedom from a tyrannical government. An RPG with similarities to the SSI AD&D games, the action is viewed in familiar pseudo-3D. All interaction is menu driven, with selections made by clicking the mouse. The number of locations are many and varied, and most are introduced by an attractive picture. Fans of this genre should be more than happy with this, and the space setting makes a welcome change from the usual medieval fantasy.

• ACE RATING 885 ON AMIGA

CAPTIVE

Mindscape • Amiga £24.99 • Atan ST/E £24.99 • PC £29.99
Another in the ever expanding number of RPGs portrayed using first-person perspective. Captive, written by veteran programmer Tony Crowther, pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing to defend you but a briefcase. This briefcase, however, contains a computer giving you remote control over a four-droid team with which you must free yourself from the fortress where you are imprisoned. Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric real-time stereo sound and a total of 65000 levels to explore place Captive very much in

the ACE-rated category.

• ACE RATING 930 ON AMIGA

COVERT ACTION

Microprose • PC £39.99
Yet another secret agent game! You play Max Remington, ex-CIA man, who is now earning a crust as a undercover investigator. However, Max is known to waive the fee for the President of the United States. On offer are four skill levels, three mission areas, three crime types and over a dozen enemy operatives to contend with. As you would expect from Microprose there's a wealth of detail and the tasks on offer are going to require many months of work to crack. Go to it, Max

• ACE RATING 902 ON IBM PC

CORPORATION

Core Design • Atan ST £24.99 • Amiga £24.99 • PC £29.99
This role-playing cybernetic extravaganza from CORE pushes the limits of previous RPGs just that bit further. Corporation is a 3D exploration, puzzle-oriented arcade combat game (?) in the mould made traditional by the original Dungeon Master RPG. Your objective is to find and remove an embryo belonging to the ultimate biogenetic killing machine, bred by the UCC Corp. Light-source shaded graphics and sound of film-like quality, along with excellent playability and an intuitive control method all contributed in pushing Corporation over the 900 mark.

• ACE RATING 945 ON AMIGA

DAMOCLES

Novagen • Atan ST £24.95 • Amiga £24.95 • PC £TBA
This unusual combination of flight sim and adventure game, and sequel to the well-received Mercenary, has been in development for a couple of years now, but the resulting game has been worth the wait. The wireframe graphics of the original game have been replaced by solid 3D vector graphics, but they are just as fast. There are now nine planets to explore instead of one city, so there is plenty of long term challenge here

• ACE RATING 935 ON ATARI ST

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose • Atan ST £29.99 • Amiga £29.99 • PC £39.99
A program that could well be described as the Flight Simulator's Flight Simulator. The PC version has enjoyed much success since its

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launched a year ago, and now it's brothers on the ST and Amiga look set to do the same. The sim is based around the much talked about (or perhaps that is whispered about) Stealth Fighter it boasts four huge scenarios with hundreds of missions, and plenty of detail. If you are looking for the definitive flight sim, then you can't go far wrong with this one

★ ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99
 This violent clash between two soft-polygon general pugilists is the best rendition of the 'noble art' yet seen on a home computer. The use of polygons allows the action to be viewed from absolutely any angle, and a video playback option allows you to watch that decisive upper-cut again and again. Highly realistic, with a huge range of moves and a lot of work to be put in if you're going to become World Champ!

★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS DRIVING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99
 A 3D-polygon racing game, and arguably the best yet, providing far more depth than its nearest rival, Indy 500 though how it compares to Hard Oxxon 2 has yet to be seen. Can be played against the clock or another driver, in which case each designs a course, trying to exploit the weaknesses of the other (i.e. fear of heights!). Both drivers then race on the two tracks. Spectacular wins and crashes can be viewed from any angle in the playback option. A successful mix of simulation and knock-about fun.

★ ACE RATING 880 ON IBM PC

HARPOON

Microsoft/PSS ● PC £29.99
 Quite simply the best naval simulation to be released for the General Public. The battleset that comes with the game deals with East West conflict in the North Sea, but other battlesets will be available soon. A clever system of three map types is used to effectively manage each mission. The nice thing about Harpoon is that the computer takes care of all the boring mechanics, allowing you to concentrate on broad tactics. A must buy for anyone interested in modern naval warfare

★ ACE RATING 940 ON IBM PC

THE IMMORTAL

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99
 Nothing new in the plot department, unfortunately Old wizard...enter dungeon...defeat monsters...avoid traps...solve puzzles...rescue Grand Wizard...etc.etc. However, the presentation is something else. An isometric 3D angle is used to view the events, and your character moves around it freely, combating monsters and so on. Every move is beautifully animated. There are only 50 locations to visit, but every one is going to take a lot of work to puzzle through. WARNING! this program only works on 1Mb machines!

★ ACE RATING 910 ON ATARI ST

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts ● PC £24.95 ● Amiga £24.95
 The ultimate racing game. Indy 500 uses state of the art solid vector graphics which really add something to the high speed action. As in Activision's Bomber there is a variety of out-of-cockpit views to select from, the realistic handling of the cars will have you coming back to this game time and time again

★ ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin Graphics ● 16-bit formats £24.99 ● 8-bit formats £10.99
 Remember Pit Stop III? Gremlin obviously do, because this game employs a similar split-screen effect as that ageing classic to allow two players to race against each other at the same time. This, and the fact that the 3D effect actually does convince you that you're travelling at the speed on your meter, puts Lotus way ahead of the rest of the pack. With 32 tracks, 3 difficulty levels and the option to choose between automatic and manual gears, this is one racing game with far a bit of mileage

★ ACE RATING 875 ON AMIGA

MIDWINTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.95 ● Amiga £24.95 ● PC £24.95
 The latest mega hit from top programmer Mike Singleton, creator of Lords of Midnight. The game is set on a frozen island in the future. Your task is to recruit members of the Peace Force to fight off General Masters' invasion force. This is done by managing people and resources via a series of Fractal Maps and menus. The game has disappointing sound, but nice 3D



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graphics, and enough solid game-play to keep you going for months.
ACE RATING 948 ON ATARI ST

MYTH

System 3 ● 8-bit formats
 £8.99cs/£14.99dk
 The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of its size and depth but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability.

ACE RATING 925 ON C64

POWERMONDOER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ●
 Atan ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with one of the highest ACE ratings ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, nps for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-

based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund/Domark ● Amiga
 £24.99 ● Atan ST £24.99 ● IBM
 PC £24.99

A game that could so easily go unnoticed and unloved by the shelf scouring hordes looking for the latest licence. The graphics, when static, are fairly unimpressive (although they do get a lot better in later levels), but when they move... The animation as you guide a young Prince through unlevelled levels of platforms, pits, spikes and swordsmen is quite excellent and life-like. And the gameplay, although it may sound uninspired, is as good as the graphics. Some of the action has a real cliff-hanger aspect to it. A gem.

ACE RATING 815 ON AMIGA

RICK DANABROUS 2

Microstyle ● 16-bit formats £24.99
 ● 8-bit formats £9.99cs/£14.99dk

After his Indy-inspired adventures in the prequel, Rick looks to the stars and dons leopard and blond garb for his second run-in with the Fat Man. Set over five levels, the game generously allows the player to take on the first four in any order. The graphics and sounds are nice, but not stunning. With platform games playability is everything, and *RD2* has it in buckets.

ACE RATING 870 ON ATARI ST

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ●
 Amiga £18A

Using the *Ultima* W interface, Origin takes a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested *Lost World*, full to the brim with new quests. A rollicking good yarn well told and - hard to believe we know - actually better than *Ultima VI*.

ACE RATING 959 ON IBM PC

SIMULCRA

Microstyle ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atan
 ST £24.99

In the future, physical conflict is a

thing of the past, with all wars being fought in Cyberspace. However, a virus has caused the simulated battles to spill into 'true' reality. You must enter the 'battle matrix', destroy the rampaging *smulcraft* and ultimately the matrix itself. Although basically a shoot 'em-up, with the usual variety of add-ons to pick up, *Smulcraft's* claim to fame is the incredible rotating patchwork 3D world where the combat takes place. Fast and furious action, excellent aesthetics and a slight strategy element make this one of the best games of the year.

ACE RATING 936 ON ATARI ST

SORCERERS OET ALL THE GIRLS

Legend/Microprose ● Currently only available on PC in the US. Call US Prose on 0101 301 771 6700 for mail order details.

Set in a medieval fantasy world, you play a student at Sorcerer University who wakes one day to find the campus deserted. Something terrible's happened and it's up to you to save the day... This has all the qualities you'd expect from an adventure written by ex-Infocom staff: it's big, well-written, with lots of (sometimes

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quite dreadful humour, graphics (occasionally animated) and most importantly - an engaging plot with loads of sub-scenarios. The only minus point is the antiquated parser which had to be told to do everything.

★ ACE RATING 855 ON IBM PC

SPEEDBALL 2

Mirrodsoft ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atan ST £24.99 ● PC £TBA

The sequel to the Bitmap Byros' violent 88 hit. Basically more of the same but with improved graphics, a bigger multi-directional scrolling patch (festoosed with bumpers and ball engenders), extra power-ups and armour to pick up or buy between games, smoother control and a death-enhancing player-manages element. Highly playable, and the power-ups do have a noticeable effect on the game. More fun than that beating up you kid brother. Or even better, play your brother in two-play mode then beat him up!

★ ACE RATING 889 ON ATARI ST

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

Activision ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atan ST £24.99

Yet another sequel (sort of) to Paul

Shirley's original 8-bit game. This one sees the return of GERALD (the uncontrolled Geographic Environmental Reconnaissance And Landmapping Device), who resembles a spinning top and you have to guide around 32 multidirectional scrolling worlds of precocious plat forms, icy ramps, lifts, switches and roaming nasties in a search for diamonds. A clear mix of arcade thrills and puzzle solving that requires you put in a little effort at first, but will make you glad you did in the end.

★ ACE RATING 850 ON AMIGA AND 880 ON ATARI ST

TEAM YANKEE

Empire International ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The interesting use of 3D bit-mapped graphics to depict the action rather than the expected polygons pays off in this involving tank war simulation. Although they get a little blocky close-up, this is more than compensated for by their speed and detail (half the brick is being able to correctly identify your own vehicles and not fire on them!) You control a four tank platoon, which you can switch

between with ease, on a wide range of missions. Early accessibility but mounting complexity as you gain experience make this a perfect purchase for any strategist from novice to master.

★ ACE RATING 893 ON AMIGA

ULTIMA VI

Origin/Mindscape ● Atan ST £TBA ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99 ● C64 £TBA

The ultimate role playing game. Sixteen thousand objects, two hundred and fifty characters, unlimited encounters, a quest that will take months to solve, and graphics better than you'll see on any other game of this type. The Ultima series of RPGs go from strength to strength. Jon forces with Lord British and once more enter the fray... unbeatable stuff! And if you find it's to your taste, the icing on the cake is that Origin are now producing scenarios using the same system. Savage Empire is already out. See ACE issue 39.

★ ACE RATING 950 ON IBM PC

WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but any sense of deja vu is completely dispelled by the use of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface gloss. Sadly only best appreciated on a high speed PC

★ ACE RATING 943 ON IBM PC

WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atan ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, leeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. All adventure fans kneel and play - an essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC

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ACE DIARY

JANUARY

6 - 12 JANUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Titus: *Dick Tracy* (Amstrad GX4000 £24.95, C64, Spectrum £10.99 tape/£14.99 disk; ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Shoot 'em up based on the Beatty/Madonna film.

Software Business: *Tarot* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Arcade-style scrollie.

Thalion: *Enchanted Land* (ST £24.99). Appealing run-around game with cutesy cartoon-style characters.

Virgin: *Diplomacy* (C64 £10.99 tape, £14.99 disk). Balaeted appearance for C64 version of classic board game.

Sunday 6

Twelfth Night: time to take all those tired looking decorabons down. Football. FA Cup third round matches take place.

Monday 7

Tuesday 8

Birthday of Elvis Presley, 1935
Birthday of David Bowie, 1947

Wednesday 9

Thursday 10

Friday 11

Saturday 12

Sunday 13

14 - 20 JANUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Domark: *Hard Drivin' 2* (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). More courses, a design-your-own-course facility, and two-player, two-machine option.

Psygnosis Stazers: *Blax!* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). Rereleased on new budget label at new budget price.

Ballistic (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99).
Blood Money (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99).

Palace: *Dragon's Breath* (PC £29.99)

Virgin: *Gemini Wing* (Spectrum, C64, CPC tape only £2.99; ST, Amiga £7.99). Budget rerelease.

Monday 14

Tuesday 15

Wednesday 16

Prohibition began in the USA on this day in 1920.

Thursday 17

Friday 18

Saturday 19

Sunday 20

21 - 27 JANUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Psygnosis Stazers: *Inferstron* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99).

Menace (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99);
Stryx (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99).

16-Bits: *Yes Prime Minister* (PC £4.99). Type-in adventure based on TV series.

Magnetic Scrolls: *Wonderland* (Amiga £29.99). Innovative graphic/text adventure, based on Lewis Carroll's Alice books, using Scrolls' own windowing and multi-menu environment.

Image Works: *Back to the Future 3* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £9.99 tape/£14.99 disk; ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Shoot 'em up chase game which follows the Wild West theme of the film.

US Gold/Lucasfilm: *Secret of Monkey Island* (ST, Amiga £24.99).
Secret of the Luftwaffe (ST, Amiga £24.99).

Monday 21

Marlin Luther King Day (USA)
Terry Waite disappeared in Beirut on this day in 1987.

Tuesday 22

Wednesday 23

Thursday 24

Friday 25

Roll out the Haggis - it's Burns Night.
Cricket: England vs Australia, fourth test match begins in Adelaide

Saturday 26

Australia Day.
National Day, India.

Sunday 27

American Football. Superbowl XXV.

28 JAN - 3 FEB SOFTWARE RELEASES

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Domark: *MIG 29 Futurum* (ST, Amiga £34.99; PC £29.99). Flight sim based on the renowned Soviet air fighter

Krisalis: *World Championship Boxing Manager* (PC £24.99).

Released by Goliath Games last year on ST and Amiga; Krisalis snapped up the PC rights.

Virgin: *Judge Dredd* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £10.99 tape/£14.99 disk; ST, Amiga £24.99). Patrol the mean streets in bash 'em game licensed from the comic strip.

Monday 28

The US space shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after lift-off on this day in 1986.

Tuesday 29

Wednesday 30

Thursday 31

FEBRUARY

Friday 1

Cricket: England vs Australia fifth test match begins in Perth.

Saturday 2

Candlemas Day

Sunday 3

Eighth Sunday before Easter

4 - 10 FEBRUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Bitmap Brothers: *Goals* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Arcade adventure with a classical Greek flavour.

Image Works: *Cadavar* (PC £29.99). Bitmap Bros' arcade adventure sat in cavernous terrain.

Krisalis: *Hill Street Blues* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Law enforcement in the Hill Street precinct as you play Frank Furillo, looking after up to 1,200 computer generated vehicles and people.

Image Works: *Battle Master* (PC £29.99).

Final Battle (PC £29.99).
Theme Park Mystery (PC £29.99).

Killing Cloud (ST, Amiga £24.99)

PSS: *Champion of the Raj* (ST, Amiga, 24.99, PC £29.99). Level 9 developed graphic adventure set in British-occupied India.

Virgin: *Supremacy* (PC £29.99). Highly complex game of intergalactic trading and domination.

Fist of Fury (Spectrum tape only £9.99, C64, CPC tape £10.99/disk £14.99; ST, Amiga £34.99). Compilation featuring *Double Dragon II*, *Ninja Warriors*, *Dynamite Dux* and *Shinobi*.

Monday 4

Nabonid Day, Sri Lanka

Tuesday 5

Wednesday 6

Waitangi Day, New Zealand.
England play Cameroon in a friendly at Wembley.

Thursday 7

Friday 8

Saturday 9

Sunday 10

Planning an event?

Don't keep your plans under wraps. Let the Clery Editor know! It couldn't be easier to do and it's only cost you the price of a phone call. Just telephone Christina on 091 444 0171.

ACE DEALS

It's a great time for bargain hunters. All those goodies that never made your Christmas stocking can now be snapped up at a cut-down price with some judicious shopping around.

Software Circus' bonanza sale has already kicked off, with some great deals on ST, Amiga and PC software in its London-based stores (store locations are given below).

The Microbyte team will be holding sales in most outlets throughout January, along with a special double Collect'n'Select stamp promo. Pick up a Collect'n'Select folder from the store and then each time you make a purchase you'll be given stamps to stick in it. Amass a certain number of stamps and you can trade in the folder for free products. Double Collect'n'Select means more stamps for your purchases.

In the first week of Jan, the Virgin Games Centres' sales begin in all

Lots of post-Xmas offers here! Check 'em out!

stores around the country. Virgin promises oodles of software, a few bargain consoles, and add-ons such as joysticks going for a song.

As for special offers on particular games, these are notoriously difficult to arrange at this time of year, thanks to the phenomenon of 'Christmas slippage' - products due before Christmas that mysteriously creep into shops in January. However, Virgin is planning (yet another) giant set of special offers on Sega consoles for the first two weeks of 1991 - so check individual stores for details.

Software Circus is taking heart from the increasing popularity of the PC-compatibles for entertainment junkies, and will be featuring

some new US imports in its stores round about now. Also, Software Circus should have a new store opening soon, probably in the City of London area, so if you work round there, you'll be able to go software shopping in your lunch hour. Full details in this column as soon the plans are finalised.

On the hardware side, Computer Store's Amiga Megabundle is still on sale. For £799 you can buy a pack including the Amiga 500, colour monitor and Citizen printer, complete with blank disks, dust cover, mouse mat and printer paper.

There are Microbyte stores in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham; Kirkcaldy, Wakefield; the Metro Centre, Gateshead; the Graenmarket, Newcastle Upon Tyne; the Kirkcaldy Centre, Bradford; the Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham; the County Arcade, Leeds; Pastura Road,

Goole; Meadow Hall Centre, Sheffield; St John's Centre, Liverpool; and St George's Centre, Preston.

Virgin has Games Centre on London's Oxford Street (at Marble Arch, within the Megastore, and at No. 100), Bristol, Kingston and Oxford, and also in Megastores in Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow (at Union St and Argyle St), Leeds, and Nottingham.

Both Software Circus outlets are in London's West End - one in The Plaza, Oxford Street, the other at 282, High Holborn, London WC1.

The Computer Store chain is based in Yorkshire, with shops at Printing Office St, Doncaster; Ivegate, Bradford; Trinity St Arcade, Leeds; Market Place, Huddersfield; Westmorland St, Wakefield; St Sampson's Square, York; The Woodhouse, Halifax; Market St, Barnsley; High Street, Scunthorpe; Penstone Street, Spafeld; and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham.

All offers and promos are subject to stock availability. Although we do our best to ensure our information is accurate at the time of going to press ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

Attention dealers! Don't keep your promotions, competitors, special offers, etc. a secret. Tell us at ACE and we'll tell everybody else!

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ADVENTURELINE

Stuck in an adventure? Write in with the name of the game and the nature of your problem. Be as specific as possible and I'll do my best to answer (on these pages only so no SAEs please), and if I don't know the answer, I know a man who.....! News, tips, gossip, anecdotes and adventuring trivia are also all most welcome. Write to me, Pat Winstanley, Adventureline, Pink Box, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

NOW HEAR THIS!

If you want to contribute to these pages, get your pen out and start scribbling! Particularly welcome are short, self-contained hints and single problem solutions. I'm also interested to hear of PD and Shareware programs - the best will be reviewed (space permitting), as I've done with *Jungle Bungle* here. So get in touch!

CAPTIVE

This month I've been plugging away at CAPTIVE and in the course of seeking help have discovered a handy hint for starting off with stronger than usual characters. If you name an android "ANN DROID" you'll end up with attributes of 6, 15 and 15 - quite a flying start. There is also a name based on Batman which creates good attributes - has anyone found a name which will give a straight 15 across the board?

Stiff on Captive, once you collect some firearms, watch where the shots go. Weapons such as the Hunter shoot high, while Magnums shoot low. On one of the early planets you'll be confronted by floating monsters which are inaccessible to handguns unless you use the Amb. Grav to turn upside down. It's not necessary to explore every cranny of each level sometimes all the extra rooms hold are extra monsters. While this means extra money, the cost of repairing your armour can outweigh any gains made.

Try to collect as many probes as possible early on, then instead of crippling yourself

dragging them around with you (as I did!), set them all off as soon as possible, making a note of the co-ordinates and order in which future planets are found. Another idiot thing I managed was to land on planets which apparently contained a single square of land - yes, you've got it - who forgot to centre the cross-hairs on the one and only island!

Don't bother with fancy weapons until you have the skill to use them. The monetary system is well judged to match your progress, and better weapons cost far more to am than simpler, equally effective ones. By the way, peep round corners carefully (and save regularly) as there are some enemies - namely those men with cannons shooting blue cannon-balls - who will take you out with one shot! However, careful use of doors as shields can cause enemy fire to bounce back on the nasty opponent, and cause it to effectively commit suicide. But watch out - the same can happen to you as I discovered to my cost! Space Station, here I come ...

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2

Augustus De Silva's solution romps on. Time now for some holiday antics. Try on the shorts you bought behind the cubboard. Now go to the pool, put on the sunscreen and wait on the sunbed until a woman comes. Don't follow her because she is a KGB agent. Dive into the pool and swim. Get the bikini top under water quickly, get out of the pool and cover yourself with sunscreen again. Sit down, and again, ignore the woman because she is another KGB agent.

Now go back to your cabin and wear your leisure suit. Save your game before entering the other room. Open the right hand drawer and quickly get the sewing kit and leave. Head for the bridge and move the switch on the right hand side without distracting the captain's attention. The alarm should sound, so run for the lifeboat. Jump in, and when in the water wear the wig, use sunscreen and eat the spinach dip. In 10 days you'll be on the beach.

Go south in the vegetation and get a flower then find a gap in the vegetation and you should be at the restaurant. Talk to the man and wait

until you are shown to a table. Then sit on the waiting chair, and once you are allowed in get the knife at the buffet bar. Leave, finding another gap, and you should be in a guest room where you should pick up the soap and matches before heading for the barbers.

ZAK MCKRACKEN

Mike Bareham's solution continues. You should now be controlling Arnie. Walk to the airport and use the reservations terminal to buy a ticket to Cairo. Walk to the plane, walk outside. Go to the leg on the sphinx with the secret door in it and enter. Use the sphinx map again to find the room with the secret panel in it. When you are there, read the hieroglyphics and push the buttons on the wall in the order they say. Switch to Zak. Use the crayon on the wallpaper map.

Read the strange markings on the wall and make a diagram of them, calling it Ne. 3. Use the sphinx map again to find your way back to

LET ME KNOW!

If there is any special subject you'd like to see covered in Adventureline, then let me know at the address in the panel on the left.

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Yo! Dudes! This is Cosmo again!

It's New Year and all that in' it an' Mr Mike is messin' around with all this funny stuff. He's got some really great new stuff in like with disks with me on 'em and there really cool!

Also Dudes, I could barely move for all these new Star Primary things. So you had better get some off him whilst he's got 'em. And he's got all these ribbons an' disks an' things an' cables an' things so you might want some of 'em as well Dudes!

Well, that's it then Dudes. Hope you're bearing up in the New Year. Bye Dudes

Cosmo



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Amnesia: The Castle	19 90	19 90			
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FREEBIES

MARK SMIDDY takes another wander through the wonderful world of PD and Shareware games

CAPTAIN COMIC

£3.50 PC - REQUIRES 256K

WHEN I STARTED WRITING THIS COLUMN OUR ESTEEMED EDITOR CHARGED ME WITH THE TASK OF GOING BOLDLY FORTH AND BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN PD AND SHAREWARE GAMES FOR THE AMIGA, ST AND PC. "THE PC?" I SAID, "WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS WOULD WRITE A GAME FOR THE PC AND GIVE IT AWAY?" MICHAEL DENRO IT SEEMS, IS ONE SUCH PERSON, ALTHOUGH JUDGING BY HIS INTRODUCTION TO COMIC, HE SHARES MY VIEWS ABOUT SHAREWARE. COMIC, INCIDENTALLY IS FREEWARE, BUT IF I UNDERSTAND MIRE CORRECTLY, LIBRARIES SHOULD NOT BE DISTRIBUTING IT.

So what about the game? It's an arcade adventure set in space. You play the main character, Captain Comic, faced with the task of recovering three lost treasures stolen from the planet Omnic and hidden somewhere on planet Tembi. Travelling through a night of different and beautifully illustrated landscapes - the Captain can feast on his Blast-O-Coke, do battle with a variety of bug-eyed and multi-coloured monsters until finally completing his quest.

Visually the game looks much like a simplified version of Shadow Of The Beast and owes much to the EGA graphics and good character design. The sound, as usual, is a let down but this is arcade in almost all PC terms. Also, the control keys initially require the manual dexterity of an intrepid rubber man.

Cave's aside, Captain Comic is a real whizz at a little

WE WANT YOU

"Cor blimey mate - they haven't covered Revenge Of The Mutant Gore Terrapins." Well, if I haven't seen it, I can hardly write about it. Drop YOUR PD/Shareware game to Mark Smiddy, Co. ACE Priory Court, 30-32 Farrington Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AU marking your envelope in LARGE LETTERS "PINK PD". Remember - if you don't tell the world, the world won't sign cheques!

away enough for old cranks like me to get somewhere yet just hard enough to retain that one-mega-go appeal and keep the nine-year old from next door amused for hours. This game may be freeware but please send Mike something if you like it. There are a few good games in the PD and very few of those take advantage of EGA graphics. If you want to try just one PD PC game, get the one

ARCADIA AMIGA £2.50 - MOUSE

When STOS appeared it came with the superb breakout clone Oriol. The AMOS launch saw no such latters - until now. At last someone (Bernie Smygalski actually) has got round to writing one based on the hugely successful Arkandid. This excellent (and devilishly tricky) version not only comes with no less than 30 screens ready to go - but includes a level designer too.

The game plays very much like Arkandid - that is you bounce a ball up the screen to try to knock bricks from a wall. Arkandid added a new dimension to this simple

SHARELESS PLUG

Thanks to the following:
PC: Advantage Shareware - 0242 224340
Amiga: AMOS PD Library - 0942 495261
ST: Goodman PDL - 0782 335650

game with bonus levels. The idea of these is, when collected, they give the ball or ball extra properties. Only three barriers are built into the game: Slowdown, Magnet, Ernie ball (Bomd!), Wipe out bricks, Hard ball and Elongate ball. There is little doubt more could be added by some enterprising programmer.

Excepting the super title screen, visually the game is not the best of the genre (not bad, just not brilliant) but there's no reason why some kind-hearted artist could not beef the graphics up a bit. This would make a great game brilliant. If it were the case though, then Arkandid should be Licenceware - at this price though, get a copy! Breakout fiends will find it a must. It kept me quiet for hours.

PICK-A-PUZZLE

AMIGA £2.50 - MOUSE

Tom Tucker aka Spang, the man behind the top-selling Jungle Bungle and Thingymajig has done it again. This time, he has created a fantastically difficult, devilishly complex jigsaw puzzle game for adults. This mention of adults does not have the usual implications, it just means Len thinks it too tricky for kids. Personally, I'd agree - it's darned difficult on level 1 - even with the help

Based on the traditional idea of jigsaws, the game is supplied with eight puzzles in all, with data disks available in the PD and a screen designer in the pipeline. Enthusiasts will find it a real challenge - as will almost anyone who finds violence associated with normal games a turn off. Nice one Len (again)

DRAGON'S TOWER

A very long time ago, when I was still programming games for a living (old programmers never die, they just become crabs) I wrote a game for the BBC Micro called Craze Caverns. But, I hear you cry, why mention the now? Simple. Because Dragon's Tower is in many ways similar to Craze. It was written in machine code and took months of tortuous work to put together. It used some (at the time) ground breaking code like flicker free sprites that didn't affect the background and pixel perfect collision detection.

Craze's graphics weren't staggering - but per for the time. This is one area where Dragon's Tower scores - the unbelievably cute graphics are a beautifully drawn and indistinguishable from a commercial title. You play the part of a simple knight, charged (I imagine) with adding troublemaker, fire breathing dragons from your local castle to this and the game features a vertical scrollie something like Pip-it and Megame or Goldrunner (remember that one?). This is all smooth, precise and faultlessly slow - so what has game went wrong?

Simple or rather, not simple but difficult, too difficult. Dragon's Tower is just too tough to be playable, even my hardened team of play testers could not get off level two. This is a great shame and so author would be well advised to take another look at the game and build in some easier screens. As it stands, Dragon's Tower is a testament to what good games should look like and a demonstration of how they should not play.

DOUGLAS ROCKMOOR

ST £3.95 - JOYSTICK

This is only getting a brief mention this month because it really deserves praise of fame. Old hacks should have guessed what it is already; the title should be a clue. It's another BoulderDash clone. The difference is this is quite simply the best available anywhere! Catch it you'll need it! eg to run it. Distributors, Buddie give me a STK version soon - this little review can wait until then. If you do have a Meg machine and you were a fan of the original (CSA and Atari) BoulderDash, get this and see what the ST can do.

ACE FREEBIES WORKS!

ACE knows this column actually results in more sales for participating libraries - at least one has had to be rescued from under the deluge of extra mail. So why, we wonder, are all those nice PC people sitting back and saying it's not for us? Come on folks - if you don't hurry your boat will sink with the ST and Amiga crowd, Are you really going to suffer that outrage?

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if you need tips with anything from Disk Drives, Printers, games, other software what to buy or anything else then we can help We have over 400 games tips and all sorts of other help If you are interested then send a SAE to Simon Ward (of the Marsy Crew) 60 Vanghan Crescent, New Brighton, Wairarapa New Zealand, England 1 525 TLP or phone at 051-6348577.

HELP given to Kings Quest 1,2,3,4, all Lyrise AF Pcs SQ's SD1, 2 and 3 and cheats to ST and chess needed too!

I can give help on the IBM PC with any of the following games Kings Quest, Space Quest, Colorsoft Requests, Conquest of Camelot, Heroes Quest and Codename Listerman and other adventures or arcade games. I am desperately wanting to get in contact with FBI, Duck and Sorcerers. Anyone in these groups please contact me or if you have their address I would be glad to hear from you. And if any IBM PC users out there wants to swap hints, tips, cheats, klags and games, then

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HELP needed in Space Quest 2. After beating myself from the cage what do I do next? Also need a colour printer for the Amiga + Amiga contacts. Send disks and letters to E. Sacker 28-2 Lyme Kin Rd, Gibraltar or phone Gibraltar 42582

All the way from Western Australia Amiga contact wanted write to Dave Gallagher 09-225-1229 23 Chisholme St, Swanview Perth Western Australia 6056 McWinter no worries but how do I get out of the clove in Delphinus Future Wars Time Travellers I m gonna need lots of tips

Maps and tips for C64 version of the Berds Tale 1 and Bloodwych Write to Mark Pearson, 113 Kinsley Close Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire

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THE W I N N E R S

END

THINK 0, THINK ACE!

Don't forget: ACE has always been published on the first Thursday of every month, but it now appears on the shelves on the 8th of every month instead.

The new system will make a big difference in terms of coverages and consistency, so **think 0, think ACE!** (CEMAP Jingles 1991)

SOOPER FAMICOM!

The Super Famicom looks sexier and sexier. Although there are still very few games available for it on the grey market, there's still one thing about the machine that suggests it may deliver a few heavyweight surprises during the coming year: It's the holes, you see, guv.

Most consoles don't have that many holes. There's usually a couple for joysticks, one for the monitor/TV, and the more successful consoles usually manage to have one for cartridges.

The Super Famicom, however, has holes for all sorts of things. And there is now no doubt that one use for them will be the provision of a CD-ROM drive in the 'very near future'.

NEC have already proved that consoles and CD's go well together, with almost 60% of the world's installed base of CD-ROM drives being attached to PC Engines. However, the Super Famicom has sufficient processing clout to do clever things with a CD-ROM, and Nintendo may well be considering adding CD+G and CD audio capability into the peripheral unit. By linking the console to the audio CD market, the company could spread even further the penetration of games lists. Good news for all of us...

Now that we're safely ensconced in 1991, here are Blitter's awards to the industry for 1990.

1. The Dullest Business Decision of the Year

NEC for their continued dithering over the PC Engine UK release. Never in the field of games technology has a machine been wanted so badly by so many and held up by so few.

2. The Most Outrageous Hype of the Year

Renegade for their promotion of the Bit Brothers. It's surely no coincidence that the first Renegade Bit Map title will be called Gods.

3. The Most Overused Phrase of the Year

Virtual reality. Closely followed by Cowabunga.

4. The Sausiest Ad of the Year

Ubisoft's Renz ad was...well, rank.

5. Most Disappointing Footy Game of the Year

Er...all of them. Kick Off 2 is not a footy game, it's a way of life.

6. The BBC Repeats Award for Deja Vu

Elite, for giving us more of what we've seen before than we've ever seen before.

7. The Failed-to-Wales-Again Award

SAM. You'll never play it again.

8. The Most Sensible Business Decision of the Year

The Lynx price cut.

9. The Best Attended Press Conference of the Year

Microprose's launch for M1 Tank Platoon at Bowington Camp. The food, for 30, was barely sufficient for Wild Bill Stealy, Martin PR Man Mof, and the ACE Editor.

10. The Most Obvious Piece of Padding at the End of An Issue

There have been no nominations for this category.

And now, to close, a word from our new Editor, Jim Douglas.

'I am to make this a magazine for mature readers. And knockers to anyone who disagrees.'

© BIR 1991



ANOTHER CHANCE TO SHINE!

Yes, we're giving you another chance to demonstrate your incredible wit and repartee. Our photograph shows two well-known industry figures. We want to know who they are and what their New Year Resolutions were. Send your entry on a postcard to ACE Celebrity Resolutions, Pink Pages, 30-32 Farringdon Lane London, EC1R 3AB. The usual £25 worth of software for the most inspired entry - so don't forget your address and machine format. Closing date February 8th 1991.

NEXT MONTH'S RED HOT!

...and we mean it! Not only will you be able to luxuriate in a full exclusive preplay of *Midwinter 2: Flames of Freedom*, but there'll also be a special cover-mounted gift to commemorate Mike Singleton's latest megagame.

Not on the outside, blazing within...with a sneak preview of *Populous 2*, the latest news from the massive CES show in Las Vegas, development reports from Electronic Arts' US office, and up-to-the-minute information on the latest Californian silicon weirdoes. And if that's not enough for you, we'll also have the second part of our Greatest Games of All Time listing and a whisky report from the Toy Fair.

ACE 42, out on Friday, February 8th - burning with the white heat of games technology!

DEAR NEWSAGENT,

I like the magazine so much, I want to buy the company. Unfortunately, because I am not as rich as that bloke from the shaver and nose-and-ear hair trimmer ads, I guess I'll have to settle for a copy of the very reasonably priced March issue of ACE Magazine (Advanced Computer Entertainment), due out on Friday February 8th. I will be forever in your debt. And I will get my free cover-mounted gift!

My name

My address

BILLY

The

KID

"BILLY THE KID" IS A 1 OR 2 PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY GAME SET IN THE WILD WEST, WHICH ALLOWS THE PLAYER TO ASSUME THE IDENTITY OF EITHER A GUN TOTTING DESPERADO WITH A HEART OF GOLD, BILLY HIMSELF, OR HIS EX-BEST FRIEND, SHERIFF PAT GARRETT.

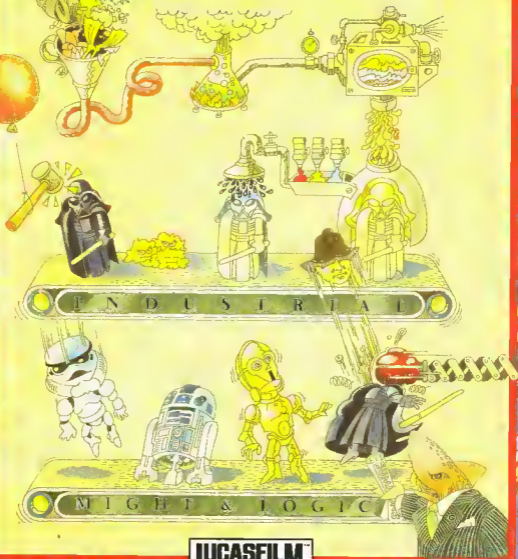
THEY ARE IN LOVE WITH THE SAME WOMAN AND ULTIMATELY, IN A NAIL BITING CLIMATIC FINALE, ARE GOING TO END UP POINTING GUNS AT EACH OTHER. ONLY ONE CHARACTER CAN WALK AWAY FROM THIS SHOWDOWN. **BUT THAT'S JUST THE**

WAY OF THE WEST.

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